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THE NEW YEAR.

BY B. CROSS.

Good-bye to the Old Year that's vanished,
Good-bye to its sorrows and care;
Let grief from our fireside be banished,
Of troubles we've all had our share.
The New Year, so joyous and smiling,
Comes in with a frolicsome bound,
And bids us, with laughter beguiling,
Shed mirth and good wishes around.
Then away with your sad ruminations,
Let's drink with a song and a cheer
To ourselves, to our friends, and relations,
A health and a Happy New Year!

'Tis right to have sensitive feeling;
But, mark me, I cordially hate
A fellow who's constantly squealing
With woe, like a pig in a gate.
This thorny old world a queer place is,
I'll own; yet I think you'll all say
'Twere folly to wear doleful faces
Whene'er we've a chance to be gay.
Then merrily fill up your glasses,
And drink with a song and a cheer,
A health to King Time as he passes,
And to all friends a Happy New Year!

UNDER WILD SKIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BENEATH THE SEA."

THE STORY.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

"WHAT, after all the preparations I have made for you—leave? Nonsense! The cabin fitted up *de luxe*, all the delicacies of the season on board, a capital cook, and because, to pay the extra expenses to which I have been put, I take a couple of passengers, you turn rusty. Fie man!"

"Captain Barker, I would have paid you everything that was necessary with pleasure," said Raby loftily. "I tell you, sir, I have made up my mind to go."

"What, and deprive that poor girl of the great advantages to follow her trip! Well," Barker continued quietly, "you can afford it, I suppose. Ah, Raby, twenty years ago, when you had not a shilling in the world, and that boy——"

"Hush," exclaimed Raby, laying his hand on Barker's arm as he looked round sharply to see that they were not observed. "Hush!"

"Oh, nobody can hear us, dear boy," said Barker, whose countenance was unmoved, though there was a keen twinkle in his eye as he saw the others discomposure. "That money came in very handy, Raby, old fellow; and I say, how wonderfully well that woman has kept the secret of the accident."

"Yes, yes; but be silent, will you!" said Mr. Raby, panting.

"I tell you nobody could hear us unless you shouted," said Barker quietly. "I think I should have got rid of her though. I don't mean pitched her out of the window into the sea!"

"Why do you bring all this up!" said Raby angrily.

"Bring it up!" said Barker with an air of astonishment depicted on his face. "My dear fellow, it came inadvertently. Ah, my dear boy, I wouldn't say a word about old times to annoy you for the world. Only you must not put wrong constructions on what I said, nor yet forget what old friends we are."

"No, no, of course not," said Mr. Raby, whose face looked grey.

"You blame me, you see, for being careful, and trying to make a few pounds. You see you have been careful of your money, while I have been more risky and speculative in my habits; sometimes winning, sometimes losing. Ah, Raby, old fellow, you have no idea what a gambler I am."

"Yes—no, of course—yes," said Mr. Raby incoherently, as he watched the speaker.

"I made and lost a good deal at blockade running during the Yankee war; and now since this Carlist set out I am doing pretty well; but with the capital you had to work with after the death of——"

"For heaven's sake, let bygones rest, Barker!" exclaimed Mr. Raby.

"Oh yes, of course, of course," said Barker hastily, but with the same strange look in his eye. "How foolish of me. You see we sailors speak out so plainly. But, as I was saying, you see I am working still. I like the change, the excitement, and I like the money it makes. So when our dear, holy friend, the Reverend Onesimus Hicks, wants to go plant hunting in the Pyrenees, and pays handsomely for the passage of himself and servant; and Stuart, Esquire, with his rich parcel of jewelry, does the same. Why of course I take them, and put the money in my pocket."

He smiled in the most amiable manner possible at Mr. Raby, whose manner was greatly subdued as he again spoke in remonstance.

"But you know, Barker, this trip was to be alone."

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Barker, "I never said so."

"But I understood you were merely trading to Spain," said Mr. Raby; "and you spoke so highly of the beauty of the voyage."

"Of course; so I did, my dear fellow. It was, you remember, when I dined with you, and said I did not like your sweet child to look so delicate, and proposed the voyage. And it will do her good—no end of good; so say no more about going ashore."

"But——" began Mr. Raby.

"And I shall have an opportunity of enjoying her society and yours——"

Mr. Raby made an impatient movement.

"And when you like," continued Barker, watching him with the same peculiar look in his eye, "we can talk over old times. But there, excuse me, I must go on deck now and look how things are going. Will you come, or make yourself happy with a cigar?"

Mr. Raby seemed stunned; but making an effort he recovered himself somewhat, and followed Barker on deck to see the shores of the Thames slowly, as it were, gliding by them, so easy and graceful was the motion of the vessel. The pilot was at the wheel with one of the crew, others were helping Oakum and Franks to clear the deck; Stuart was smoking a cigar, with his back to the port bulwarks; and Mary was apparently listening to the conversation of the Reverend Onesimus, who was waving his hand oratorically as he discoursed about the various points of interest they passed.

"Look at Mary," said Barker in a whisper to his companion. "Why the girl's quite at home already. Raby, old friend, it will be the making of her this voyage; and what is more, it will draw us together in such closer bonds, that we shall be the closest of friends evermore."

He smiled significantly at the man he addressed, and then went aft to speak to the pilot.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PARSON'S DISCOURSE.

MR. RABY stood for a few minutes biting his lips and frowning. He was staring at vacancy, but in those few minutes scene after scene of his past life flashed through his memory, till instead of growing clearer by thought, he became confused. He could not understand Barker's way; there was something repulsive in his manifestations of friendliness that set him puzzling his brain as to whether there could be any motive at the back. At one moment he seemed to see light, but the next he dismissed the thought as absurd; hints of the old times were spoken out so ingenuously that there could be no *arrière pensée*. But directly after there was another suspicion waiting to be crushed down: Mary had said something about Barker being too attentive, but that could only be a silly, girlish fancy. Attentive! Well, what if he was? Would not any man display a certain amount of gallantry towards a pretty, *naïve* girl?

But it was very annoying, he thought, to come on board and find these people in possession, and then for Mary to display such repugnance to staying.

"Well," he muttered, as he glanced towards where Mary was standing, "she seems satisfied enough now, and a parson's a parson; his cloth makes him presentable. We shall be obliged to go on, I suppose, and make the best of it. If I am not satisfied I can but bring them back in one of the packets."

He took a stride or two each way, still biting his lips with annoyance as he recalled some of Barker's words; but his brow cleared as he saw Stuart slowly coming towards him.

"Humph!" he muttered, "here's the jewel man. Well, I suppose it will pay best to be civil."

Stuart came up with a slow lounger's crawl, and a most ingratiating smile upon his face, to say in a mincing drawl:

"Ah, my dear sir; glad to see you on deck. I've come to complain."

"Indeed, sir," said Mr. Raby with a stiff bend of the head, which did not in the slightest degree chill the exquisite.

"Yes, 'sure you. It's too bad, you know. 'Pon my word, my dear sir, I don't wish to be disrespectful to the cloth; but look at that, you know. Too bad, really."

He pointed, smiling inanely the while, at where the Reverend Onesimus and Mary were standing gazing at the Kentish shore; but Mr. Raby refused to see anything in the remark, and evidently chafing at the interruption to his musings, he said, more stiffly than ever:

"Really, sir, I am quite at a loss to understand you. I am no guesser of riddles; have the goodness to speak out and say what you mean."

"Ugh! you old pagan," said Stuart mentally; and then aloud: "Your charming daughter, you know, accompanied by our stout friend—priestly domination and that sort of thing."

"Really, sir," began Mr. Raby, now getting wroth.

"No offence, 'sure you," said Stuart, fixing his glass in his eye. "Only, can't get a word with her ra'ally—'bliged to ask you to interfere, as we are now such a family party."

"I see no cause for interference, sir," said Mr. Raby, growing more and more frigid, for the remarks of the exquisite were making him repent his determination to make the best of things and stay; "and I must inform you, sir, that my daughter has a decided liking for the conversation of sensible, cultured people, who are gentlemen——"

"Glad to hear it, I'm shaw," said Stuart. "Yes, s'pose so; perhaps you'll introduce me!"

"And a great abhorrence of puppies," exclaimed Mr. Raby, unable to restrain the rage that was bubbling for exit; and with this keenly savage remark he strode to the cabin stairs, hurried down, lit a cigar and began to smoke furiously.

"An old beast!" said Stuart, looking after him. "Well, I have not made a very favorable impression upon him; but never mind, I must work for myself; and it strikes me very forcibly, Mr. Parson Hicks, that you are not going to have it all your own way."

He stood looking towards where the couple were standing, and then sauntered back, to draw out a delicate looking cigarette case, open it, take out one of the fragile paper tubes and begin to smoke, as Mary Raby and her newly made acquaintance turned and came towards the centre of the schooner.

"Yes, my dear young lady," said the clergyman, "I'm sure we shall improve the leisure hours of what will be a very pleasant voyage. Let me see," he continued, laying one finger upon another, "there will be the luminosity or phosphorescence of the water."

"Ah yes," said Mary eagerly, "as I have seen it at Hastings."

"Exactly," said the reverend gentleman. "Then discourses upon the floating weeds; perhaps on the sargassum or gulf weed."

"Yes; how interesting," said Mary, with eyes sparkling and a roseate flush on her delicate cheeks.

"No preaching, you understand, my dear," continued the Rev. Onesimus ponderously. "I can't preach, so I have had to turn into a poor naturalist of simple tastes; no preaching, but plain natural history discourses upon pleasing objects."

"Yes, I understand what you mean," said the young girl ingenuously, as her companion drew her arm a little more through his own, and patted her little blue-veined hand with an unctuous look upon his countenance.

"Then, my dear young lady," he continued, "there will be the various forms of medusæ or jelly fish; the tides or currents; the color or tints of the water; and perhaps, as we near the coasts of sunny Spain, probably we shall see a few fish. I don't think this will prove either a dull or an unprofitable voyage."

"I am quite sure it will not," said Mary, who started when Franks passed her; and then the flush upon her cheek deepened a little as the young man stopped close by to commence laying down a rope in regular rings upon the white deck.

"Yes, my charming little companion," continued Hicks, glancing full at where Stuart was standing, "taken altogether, if we can exorcise the demon of sea sickness, this will be a most delightful voyage. When shall we begin our lessons?"

"Whenever you please," said Mary, smiling.

"It shall be to-morrow then, my dear, after I have had a good long chat with your estimable papa. Yes, to-morrow; and I've plenty of books of reference with me."

"Thank you very much," said Mary, smiling; "and now I think I will rejoin papa."

Her words were overheard by Stuart, who hastily threw away his cigarette, stepped before them and exclaimed:

"Allow me, Miss Raby. Your papa has just gone into the cabin."

CHAPTER VIII.

A BREEZE ON THE THAMES.

MARY RABY shrank closer to the clergyman's side as Stuart, Esquire, offensively offered his arm, and waited smilingly for her response. The answer, however, came from the Reverend Onesimus, who, assuming something of the mien of a plump turkey cock, puffed out his cheeks, turned red, and with a good deal of uncalled for bombast exclaimed, as he drew Mary's arm through his, and patted her hand:

"Young man, have the goodness to stand aside; this young lady is under my protection."

"Sir!" began Stuart, while Mary turned pale.

"Age, sir," continued the Reverend Onesimus loftily—"age and our cloth have privileges with the sex which are not accorded to boys."

Stuart seemed petrified for a moment, and then flushing angrily—

"Confound——" he began.

"Hush, young man!" said the Reverend Onesimus sternly; "how dare you make use of improper language in the presence of a lady and a clergyman! Young man, I blush for you. Sir, I feel at this moment as if I ought seriously to call you to account for——"

"Me!" exclaimed Stuart, forgetting all his affectation in the anger of the moment. "You call me to account? Why, you——"

"Hush, sir, hush! Oh, fie! young man," said the Reverend Onesimus with a smile of pity upon his lip.

"Oh, pray allow me to go to the cabin, Mr. Hicks," said Mary, who was trembling like a leaf.

"Directly, my dear, directly," said the Reverend Onesimus in the most benignant of tones; "but wait till I have talked to this foolish boy. Your comfort must be studied during the voyage, my child; and rudeness like this is better nipped in the bud."

"Really," exclaimed Stuart, "this is insufferable."

"My good youth," said the reverend gentleman with dignity, "if I did my duty, I should scold you as I would one of my old pupils."

Stuart seemed quite staggered, and Mary looked round for the servant, but she had disappeared, and there was nothing for it but to wait until the speaker thought proper to release her, one of her hands being prisoned in his, and held quite tightly now.

"But there, there," continued the Reverend Onesimus, "you will be sorry for this to-morrow, and I have no doubt will offer an ample apology. My dear," he said, smiling in a slow, sad way down at Mary, while his spectacles looked quite dewy—"my dear, let us go. Young man," he cried, firing a last shot as he led Mary to the cabin stairs, "young man, I pity you."

Stuart, Esquire, seemed rooted to the spot

as he stared blankly after the retreating forms, ending by bursting into a coarse, derisive laugh.

"This is too good," he exclaimed angrily. "Confound his insolence, to monopolize her like this Curse him! But he shall smart for it. To dare to—oh it's too rich—'pon my soul, it's too rich!"

The man seemed beside himself with rage; the polished veneer of the surface was removed, and a virulent, spiteful look gleamed from his eyes as he stood there for a few moments with hands and feet clenched, and then turned round sharply and blundered against Franks, who was busy close beside him, and had been a spectator of a portion of the scene.

"Curse you, you clumsy oaf!" exclaimed Stuart savagely. "What are you doing there?"

"Coiling down rope," was the sharp answer; and the two young men's eyes met, each reading in the other's mutual dislike and distrust. But this lasted but for an instant. Stuart was angry—nay, savage; and here was some one—a common sailor—upon whom he could vent his spleen, as in his blind rage he thought, without fear of retort. He raised his fist menacingly.

"Why, you——" he began, and stopped, for he saw the blood flush to the young sailor's forehead, the veins stand out in knots and a look come in his face which betokened that he might prove an ugly customer if struck. Franks' voice was very cool and calm, though, as he said in a low tone:

"Don't, sir. Take my advice, and don't. It's dangerous to strike some men."

"You insolent scoundrel!" exclaimed Stuart fiercely, but hesitating all the same. "I could horsewhip you."

"You might try, sir," said Franks grimly, as he cooled down, evidently feeling his own power the while; "but, as I said before, don't. If you ask me why," he said, smiling at his adversary's discomfiture, "I'll tell you: because, sir, I'm very strong; and when I'm up I might forget myself, and that you are a passenger. I might pitch you over the bulwarks, and you might be drowned."

"You insolent scoundrel!" hissed Stuart, "you shall smart for this. Wait, my man; and recollect that when my day comes I have a black mark against your name; so look out."

Franks turned sharply upon him, for there was a malignant look in his eye that betokened no good; but the attention of both was taken off by an angry cry, and Dinah Moore came scuffling aft, angry, and with her bonnet awry, and closely followed by the two servants—Lodder, the parson's man, and Round, the fellow who had charge of the cases—both men being evidently somewhat under the influence of liquor.

"You villains!" exclaimed Dinah; "if you dare to touch me again I'll scream for help."

"Scream away, my dear," cried Lodder, catching her in his arms; "I'm better than that nigger, the cook; and I'll have a kiss now if I die for it."

As he spoke he roughly threw his arms round the woman, who at one and the same moment uttered a loud cry, and gave him a sound box on the ear. Franks started forward to her help, but before he could reach the spot Sam Oakum seemed to spring from nowhere, caught Lodder by the collar and sent him sprawling on the deck.

"Take that you country-looking lubber," he growled, rubbing his hands down the sides of his canvas trousers, and scowling at the woman he had protected. "That's women folk; but I ain't a going to stand by and see them hauled about that how. This comes o' having 'em aboard."

"You shall pay for this," cried Lodder savagely, as he sprang up and was making for Sam; but Franks caught him round the waist and held him, in spite of his struggles, while the other man, Round, who was going to his help, was caught by the shoulder by his master.

"You mad fool! what are you doing?" he hissed in the fellow's ear.

"Going to——"

"Help, help!" shrieked Dinah; and the noise brought Barker on deck, closely followed by Mr. Raby and the Reverend Onesimus Hicks.

"What does this mean?" cried Barker angrily.

"It's nothing—nothing at all, Captain Barker," said Stuart hastily; "only a little piece of foolish gallantry on the part of these men."

He smiled pleasantly, and brushed a few specks from his clothes as he spoke.

"They insulted me, sir," cried Dinah excitedly, and appealing to her master. "I was talking to the black cook about something for you, when those men came up. I won't stay; I'll go ashore."

All Mr. Raby's determination to put up with matters, and take them as he found them, were swept away on the instant. He had been annoyed at finding people on board, one of whom had pressed his attentions on his daughter; but now there was open violence, insult and annoyance, and he broke out angrily:

"This settles it, Barker. I'll put up with no more; I insist upon being set ashore. I will not stay here to run the risk of my people being insulted by the unruly people you have on board."

"Silence sir, if you please," said Barker sharply. "I see to the discipline of this vessel. Now, sir," he exclaimed, turning to Franks, "who was the aggressor?"

"That man!" cried Dinah, pointing at Lodder—"that man began it."

"What—what do I hear?" exclaimed the Reverend Onesimus. "My servant, my servant, James Lodder. Fie, fie! my good woman, I can hardly believe it."

"Leave this to me, sir," exclaimed Barker.

"No, no; excuse me," said the reverend gentleman. "It is my servant, my body servant, and it seems incredible; but I see, I see. James—James Lodder, for shame! you are not wont to behave like this; you have been amongst the sailors; you have drunk rum; you have maddened yourself with strong drinks. Go down below, James, and sleep off this filthy abomination. To-morrow you shall render me an account, and make an ample apology to this good person here."

The man turned red and angry, and was about to speak, but his master took off his spectacles, and literally looked him down, advancing upon him and following him up, until, with a low, angry growl, he went below; when the reverend gentleman replaced his spectacles and returned, looking grave, but benign, to smile on all present and sigh deeply.

"I'm afraid my man, too, has been to blame," said Stuart, Esquire, hastily, speaking to Mr. Raby and the captain. "The foolish fellow has evidently been drinking, and is not used to it. Mr. Raby, I apologize for him; pray accept my excuses. Round, go below."

"I'll be——" began the man excitedly; but before he could complete his sentence Stuart dropped the dandy once more, and displayed the man of action by clapping his hand over the insolent fellow's mouth, catching him by the collar and hurrying him to the hatchway, where he said something in a low voice which sent the fellow quietly below, while his master returned along the deck to where Mr. Raby stood, angry and chafing.

"Mr. Raby," said Hicks, as Stuart appeared, "I am as much surprised as you are, sir. I did not give my man the credit of behaving so badly. I apologize for him sincerely, and I trust that he may be forgiven. It's very, very shocking and I am deeply grieved. Let us be thankful that your daughter was not on deck."

"Captain Barker," said Stuart on the instant, but speaking a little stiffly, "I am ready to apologize as well; but I must say at the same time that I think your sailors are as much to blame for giving him rum."

"I accept your apologies, gentlemen, for myself and friend here," said Barker frankly, while Mr Raby frowned with annoyance; "and I must beg of you in future to keep a strict hand over your men, or they will have to yield to my discipline. As for my sailors, they may or may not have been to blame; but let me tell you this: they are forced to behave with decency, and I shall exact the same from the servants of my passengers."

"Certainly, Captain Barker, certainly," said the Reverend Onesimus blandly.

"Of course, of course," said Stuart hastily.

"Go down to your mistress, Dinah," said Mr. Raby, on whose brow a storm was gathering.

"Yes, sir," said the woman, going close to him and speaking in a whisper; "but do, please, sir, put an end to this, for my dear young lady's sake, and let us go ashore."

"I told you to go below to her," said Mr Raby sharply; and the woman hurried down without another word.

"Now, Captain Barker," said Raby in a low, angry voice, "a word with you if you please."

As he spoke and drew Barker aside, the Reverend Onesimus turned to his camp stool, put up his umbrella, took up a book and began quietly to read. Stuart walked musingly to the bulwarks, lit a fresh cigarette and began to smoke; while the two sailors went forward to where the look-out man was watching the calm river through which they were gently gliding on, and whose banks were now far away to right and left.

"Well, Raby, what is it?" said the Captain quietly.

"This has now gone far enough," said Mr. Raby in a low, angry voice.

"I dont' understand you," said Barker coolly.

"Perhaps you will try to then," said Mr. Raby hotly, "when I tell you once for all that I will go no farther with you; so have us set ashore."

"And perhaps," said Barker firmly, "you will try to understand me when I tell you, my good friend, that we are not far out; that I cannot turn back, and that go you must; so there's an end of it."

Then without waiting to hear Mr. Raby's reply he walked sharply aft and entered his cabin.

CHAPTER IX

GOING ASHORE.

BARKER'S coolness quite staggered Mr. Raby, and he walked sharply up and down the deck biting his lips, while the Reverend Onesimus watched him patiently from under his umbrella, and Stuart, Esquire, who had pulled out a telescope to its full length, and far beyond its proper focus, stood pretending to gaze through it at the distant shore, but all the while he was eagerly watching the motions of the irritable passenger.

After a few minutes' indecision, Mr. Raby walked to where Franks was busy.

"Look here, my man," he said; "how far are we now from the shore?"

"About ten miles, sir," said Franks smartly.

"How many?" cried Mr. Raby.

"Ten miles, sir."

"But it don't look more than one or two."

"No, sir, dessay not to a landsman," said Franks; "it's deceiving to you, but it's a good ten."

"It can't be," said Mr. Raby sharply. "Here, my man," he continued, speaking to Oakum, "how far do you say it is?"

"Good twelve," said the old fellow gruffly.

"Twelve!" cried Mr. Raby.

"All that, your honor," said Sam; "per'aps another knot."

"But we could easily be rowed ashore in the long boat," said Mr. Raby, looking from one to the other and back again as he waited anxiously for an answer.

Franks looked at Oakum, as if bending to his superior experience in such matters, but the rough salt only screwed up his face and filled it full of wrinkles as he rubbed his hands up and down the sides of his trousers, and not a sound came from his pursed-up lips. So Franks took the initiative.

"Well yes, sir," he said, "I think you could The sea is certainly rising, and it would be dark before we got ashore, but I don't think there would be any danger."

Mr. Raby nodded his head, as if in approbation, as he listened to the young man's words; and then turned aside, walked to the bulwarks and looked over the broad estuary, muttering to himself:

"I don't like it," he said; "and he shall put me ashore. It's foolish, perhaps, but I feel as if there was something at the back of all this—some plot, some mystery. Something comes over me like a foreboding of trouble to come. Good heavens! if we were to encounter some horrible storm, and with my poor child on board!"

He stood quite aghast now, thinking in a horrified way of what ashore had seemed but a trifle; but human nature is strange, and when it seeks for excuses it finds them ready on every side. The storm idea was the first that presented itself—it was tangible; while his suspicions of Barker were too light, airy and diffused, to be worked upon. So the storm did, and he seized it Turning sharply round to where Oakum and Franks were standing:

"Here, my men," he said, "could you row my party ashore?"

"Yes, sir," said Franks eagerly, and without waiting this time for Oakum to speak. "Shall we?"

"Yes, you shall," said Mr. Raby, making as if to clasp the young man on the shoulder; but he shrank away.

"What's the good o' talking like that 'ere, Jack, my lad?" said Oakum sourly. "Why anybody would think as you was the blessed skipper himself, instead of only a foremast man as has signed his articles for the voyage."

Franks gave himself a wrench, and drew in his breath impatiently through his teeth, while Oakum went on addressing Mr. Raby and at the same time keeping an eye like a danger signal fixed on Dinah, who was now standing on the cabin stairs.

"Lookye here, sir," he said. "Just you go and get the skipper's leave, and me and Jack Franks here'll tackle to and row you and your lot ashore in two or three hours or so; more or less, for it all depends on the wind. I'll take yer—and be glad to be quit on you," he added in an undertone

"Look here, my men," said Mr Raby in an eager whisper, "take me and mine ashore without the captain's consent and I'll give you ten sovereigns a piece."

"I'm on, your honor," said Oakum with a grin; and then he became apparently cataleptic as his mind engaged at once upon the abstract calculation of how many ounces of tobacco there were in a ten pound note.

"And you, my man, will you do it?" said Mr. Raby to Franks, who had been standing gazing thoughtfully upon the deck.

"Yes, sir, I'll do it," said Franks quietly, "if my mate here will stand by me."

"Ay, ay, lad, I will," said Oakum musingly; for he was in the throes of the tobacco problem.

"Then you will take us?" said Mr. Raby eagerly.

"Ay, ay, sir," said Oakum—"leastwise, if we can get away."

Just at this moment, and quite unobserved by the speakers, the Reverend Onesimus Hicks, whose nose for some time past had been buried in his book, began to close his eyes, as if in dread lest any of the wisdom with which he had been storing his brain should creep out again. Then he laid his book down on the deck and closed his umbrella, and all very softly, as if he were thinking deeply upon what he had read.

Directly after he rose from the camp stool, the frail woodwork giving a groan of relief at being freed from so heavy a weight; and then, with umbrella under his arm, he went slowly and sedately towards the cabin. The benignity upon his countenance was something charming and seemed to tell of brotherly love towards the whole world, and he sighed at times softly as he neared the stairs.

Dinah saw him coming and bobbed down out of sight while without the slightest acceleration of his pace, the reverend gentleman, evidently deep in the flora of the Western Pyrenees, slowly laid a hand upon the rails, and then turning sedately round, like a bear in broadcloth, he gently put one foot on the bright, brass-bound cabin stairs and began to descend backwards—of course for safety's sake

Meanwhile Mr. Raby was looking eagerly from one to the other, as Franks said after a few moments' thought:

"Yes, Mr. Raby, for the sake of those with you, we'll run this risk."

Mr. Raby looked at him curiously, but Franks was looking straight away.

"It will have to be done by stealth," said Franks quietly; "that is, sir, unless you can get the skipper's consent, when we will row you ashore with pleasure. If you can't get it, sir, you must come to us after dark, pretending you want to stay on deck. No; let the ladies come first, and Oakum and I will get them into the boat, which we will have lowered down all ready."

"My hye, Jack, what a skipper you'll make some day," said Oakum, gazing in admiration at his protege. "But I say, lad," he continued glumly, "what a nyste job you're a cutting on us out: two women at night in a hopen boat; Jack, my lad, I dursen't do it"

"Then you will be ready?" said Mr Raby, who in a nervous excitable way seemed to snatch at the chance of getting out of the schooner.

"Yes, sir, I'll be ready, and so will Sam Oakum here," said Franks quietly.

"Well this here's a speaking for a man and no mistake," growled Oakum; and then to himself: "two women in a hopen boat, with two unprotected sailors; ah, Jack Jack, Jack! Here, lookye here, though," he exclaimed suddenly, as he caught Franks by the sleeve; "the sea's a getting up, and there'll be wind enough to make it none too nyste in a small boat with two unprotected women aboard."

"What, are you afraid, Sam," said Franks scornfully.

"Not of the sea, my lad," said Oakum—"if I am o' summut else," he added to himself.

"If you want more money for the job say so, my man," exclaimed Raby angrily; "and don't haggle at a time like this"

"Which I didn't want nothing of the sort, sir," said Sam sorely. "What I was a going to say was this here: it won't be none too safe to-night in a hopen boat; not as the sea's like to drown old mates like me and Jack Franks here; but what I was going to say was this: what call is there for any rowing ashore at all, when here's the pilot got his lugger abaft, and he'll be going back afore long—to night or to-morrow morning, and he'll be glad of the job for a suffrin a-piece, and no damage done."

What," said Mr. Raby, jumping at the idea, "he could run us back then? Better still. Is that his boat behind there?"

"Yes, sir," said Franks, looking wistfully at him, "that's his lugger."

"Then he shall take us back," said Mr. Raby loudly; "but, my men, you shall be rewarded all the same. I beg your pardon——"

This was addressed to Stuart, who now came up smiling and pleasant to address a few words to Mr. Raby.

"I said, sir," he repeated, "surely you do not think of giving up a pleasant voyage on account of that miserably unfortunate *contretemps* at starting?"

"May I ask sir," said Mr Raby haughtily, "by what right you intrude your opinions like this upon a perfect stranger."

"Oh no, no, Mr. Raby; don't say perfect stranger," said Stuart smiling. "No offence meant, only a little bit of traveler's civility."

"Confound him! did he hear what we said?" muttered Mr. Raby; and then aloud, "When I require your help or advice, sir, I will ask it, so have the goodness not to interfere. Here, sailor," he exclaimed to Franks, and now throwing off his nervous excitement and speaking in a firm and determined tone, like one determined to carry out his plans—"here, sailor, where is the pilot?"

"Over here, sir, at the wheel," said Franks; and he led the way to where the rough pea jacketed guide to the mouth of the Thames stood, by the man handling the spokes of the wheel.

Just at the same moment, but unseen by Mr. Raby, Barker came on deck, assisting Mary up the cabin stairs, and then drawing her hand through his arm They were closely followed by the Reverend Onesimus, with eyes half closed and blinking spectacles, apparently observant of nothing but the book lore within his own brain.

"Foolish little unpleasantness," Barker was saying with *empressement* to Mary, unavoidable at starting; but all will go well in my little kingdom now."

"But," said Mary, looking timidly round, "papa, Captain Barker! You said he was on deck."

"So he was a few minutes since. Oh, here he comes! Raby, old fellow, come and stay with our little friend here; she is slightly nervous at present."

"She need not be," said Mr. Raby firmly. "Mary, where is your maid?"

"I am here, sir," crid Dinah, hurrying up.

"Heyday!" said Barker smiling, and raising his eyebrows. "Why, whatever is the matter now?"

"Nothing whatever, Captain Barker," said Mr. Raby coldly; "only that I have decided to change my plans. I have made my arrangements, and we are going ashore."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Letty's Christmas Eve.

BY A. B BALDWIN.

"RING THE BELL, Janet," said Miss Scott, "and let's have the curtains drawn, and some more coal. Ah, that's better! Now for my news! Cousin Edward's come home!"

Miss Janet Scott was rather slower than her twin sister, and she did not exactly see, since Cousin Edward had been expected for at least a month, why she should be excited about his arrival.

"Is he really?" said she. "I am glad to hear it."

Miss Scott nodded, and then added:

"And the most delightful part of it is, that he's just in time for our birthday party, Janet."

Miss Janet spread out her hands before the fire, and looked at her sister with a little nervous hesitation.

"I thought you said, Susan, that we were getting too——I mean that we had better leave off the birthday parties."

"I'm sure I don't care who knows my age. I'm thirty one."

"How time flies! You don't look thirty-one, Susan, though I do."

"Never mind about looks," was the reply. "We know what we are—that's enough."

They were sitting in the drawing room of their own house; and a very comfortable room it looked in the ruddy light from fire and lamp, and the warm brightness of the dark red curtains.

A light step, and a voice singing a snatch of some air outside, seemed to startle them both a little.

"It's Letty," said Miss Janet. "What a child it is, to be sure! You may come in!"

The owner of the voice entered, without waiting for permission.

"Now, Letty," said Miss Scott, "what are you laughing at?"

"Because you hardly saved your credit, Susan," replied Letty. "I was in before you told me I might come, you know. I don't see the good of knocking at doors when one is at home."

"We might have been engaged with visitors or business matters," said Miss Scott. "I think I have told you before that children like you should treat their elder sisters with at least some semblance of respect."

"Yes," replied Letty, "but you are only my step sisters, which makes a difference, you know."

"I don't know anything of the sort," said Miss Scott. "Come here."

Letty obeyed immedictely.

"We have determined," continued Miss Scott, looking into the mischievous face before her, "not to send you to school any more. You can go on with your studies at home," she pursued. "The library shall be given up to you for that purpose. And now, Letty," said she, "have you got a white dress?"

"Lot's of them," replied Letty. "What's it for Susan?"

"Our birthday party," broke in Miss Janet.

"Well," said Letty, "I shouldn't have thought it of you. We had a splendid party at Mrs. Placket's, and a nice little affair at Monsieur Montel's—small, but nice, you know, and select. Shall I tell you how the thing ought to be managed?"

"You absurd little piece of self-conceit!" ejaculated Miss Scott. "Go and practice your scales; and remember, Letty, that nothing is so bad for young ladies as keeping late hours. You do not stay up beyond the supper hour."

* * * * *

There was sleet and hail outside, pattering against the windows of Miss Scott's house; but no one within listened to it. Merry groups had gathered here and there in the ball room.

Miss Scott's hand was resting lightly on the arm of the unconscious hero of the night, Cousin Edward, and she felt and looked exultant. She had meant him to seek her out, and was gratified.

Raising her head, she met his eyes fixed upon her with that curious expression which his own thoughts respecting her had left in it. He was startled a little at the sudden brilliancy that had come over her face.

"So you keep up the old custom, Susan," he said.

"Yes," she replied; "a foolish custom to have begun; but now that we are getting on in years it would not do to discontinue it. People might say we wanted to cheat the hand of time; but that sort of thing won't do, Edward. It's too stern a hand for that. But we expected you home before, Edward. The Grange has been long without a master."

"Yes," said Edward; "twelve months ago I was a penniless adventurer, Susan. Now——"

In spite of her self possession, Miss Scott's heart beat a little faster than its wont. What was he going to say?

"Now," proceeded Edward, gravely, "I have gained an inheritance and lost a brother—the only near kinsman left to me."

"You are very good," said Edward. "And now let us leave grave talk; it is hardly in season here. Will you dance?"

"Not with you again," she replied; "people would accuse me of monopoly."

"People!" said Edward. "Do you know that sounds very like old times. You were always afraid of what people might say; and quite right, too, of course. By the way, I do not see your sister. No, not Janet; I mean the other one—my little cousin Letty."

An expression of impatient annoyance passed over Miss Scott's face. It was gone, however, in an instant, like the shadow of an April cloud.

"So you call her cousin, too, Edward; that is good of you. She is amusing herself with her friends—some little girls I invited on purpose."

Miss Scott tore to atoms a Christmas rose as she spoke; and long after she had quitted him, Edward stood, thoughtful, by the old-fashioned vase from which she had taken the rose. Some little of his cousin's mind he read—not all; and it was with a half smile that he turned away at last and went to look for Letty.

About an hour after that, Miss Scott coming suddenly upon a group of girls who were laughing and chattering round her step-sister, saw with a quick throb of anger or pain, or both mixed, that Letty's hand was on Edward's arm just as her own had been so lately, and that he was looking down into her face with a very different expression from the one which had been accorded to herself.

"You did not answer my question as to the date of the birthday," she heard Edward say, as she came near.

"Christmas Eve," replied Letty.

"And if one might ask, without being rude, seeing that we are cousins, how many years ago, Letty?"

"Twenty," she replied.

"Twenty!" said Edward; and she looked up at him with a quick appreciation of the amazement with which he repeated the words.

"Susan considers me quite a child," continued Letty, brusquely. "But then she forgets, and I have not long left school."

The rest of the evening was very dim to Letty; a mist of whirling figures and music without; and within the rising up of a certain new feeling which gave to all around her a significance unknown before. She could have given no description of anything that happened. She only knew, in some vague fashion, that when it was all over, and the daylight came to wake her up to ordinary life, there would still remain something which would make it impossible for her ever to be childish again.

* * * * *

"It's quite as well as it is, thank you, Janet," said Letty.

Miss Janet had just rustled into the drawing-room, ready dressed to go out; and she sat down before the fire stiffly, as though the richness of her silk dress rather oppressed her, and made it an unwise indulgence to draw so near the blaze as she did.

"Well, it is cold, certainly," continued Janet; "and then, you see, Susan might have thought it necessary to stay at home if you been entertaining your young guests. But I'm afraid you'll have a dull evening, all by yourself."

It was Christmas Eve, and the two elder sisters were going out. The invitation had included Letty, but Miss Scott thought it wisest to refuse for her since the hours would be late. And here was Miss Janet, ready dressed and shivering, wishing, with all her heart, that she might be allowed to stay at home; yet, as usual, submitting without a murmur to her sister's will.

"There's the carriage, Janet!" exclaimed Letty.

"And I was to meet Susan in the hall, and I haven't got my cloak!" said Miss Janet, springing up hastily. "Good bye, dear. I hope you won't be very dull."

Dull! Letty sat down again, and a smile stole over her face as she listened to the carriage wheels growing gradually distant. Dull! What did Janet know about it? Had life ever been made beautiful for her with such a host of thick-coming fancies as Letty's solitude could boast of.

By and by a clock struck and roused Letty, sending her into a fresh train of thought about the spectral strangeness which seemed to hang about each firm stroke of that clock as it rang through the silent house.

Yes, Miss Janet was right; Letty did begin to feel lonely, and a little dull; a little curious as to what was going on in those far off rooms where her sisters were to meet Cousin Edward. Would he ask about her? Would he bite his moustache as she had seen him do when Miss Scott said something about Letty being too young for such gaieties? Above all, would he be sorry not to see her?

A curious sensation began to rise into Letty's throat, and a certain wistfulness to her eyes, as she thought all these things; but she looked very steadily into the fire, and said to herself, "It is nonsense; I won't think about it any longer;" and then, in her next perfectly conscious moment, she suddenly rose from her seat, and stood up bewildered before Edward as he came forward to shake hands with her.

Probably the sight of her confusion helped him to master his own, for he made no pretense of giving back the hand he had taken in salutation, but kept it in his own while he spoke.

"Many happy returns of the day, Cousin Letty!"

"But—Mr. Scott——"

"Why am I Mr. Scott, Letty? If we are cousins, you should say, Edward. Your sisters do."

"But that is not the same thing," said Letty, with an effort to speak lightly. "I am not your cousin, and you have played the truant."

"Exactly," said Edward.

He saw a tremulous movement of Letty's hands, and he saw that the fitful color in her cheeks was not altogether owing to the firelight.

"I have played the truant; you are right," said he "and it was because I knew I should find you here alone. Letty," he added, gently, "do you know the Grange?—a great, old, lonely house, with no familiar faces in it except the faces on canvas. How can a man live in such a place alone? Come and be mistress there, Letty. Be my wife. Say yes, and then you shall tease me as much as you like, or I'll go away and be a good boy at the party, if you say I must."

Letty gave him a single frightened look, and said:

"Susan?"

"Is that all?" said Edward. "Susan won't object. My dear little girl, you are not afraid of her? Come nearer, Letty; I am going to tell you something."

"Well?" said Letty.

"Do you know I was once very near falling in love with Susan?"

"Not—this time Mr. Scott?"

"Edward," insisted Mr. Scott. "No, not this time," he replied, "but years ago. I am glad now, though I thought it hard at the time, that I went abroad when I did. Letty, I should like to know if you are glad too? You won't speak! Well, then, am I to go back to that stupid party, or shall I stop and see Susan to-night? She won't be long now. Come, I must have an answer."

"Edward," insisted Mr. Scott. "No, not this time," he replied "but years ago. I am glad now, though I thought it hard at the time, that I went abroad when I did. Letty, I should like to know if you are glad too? You won't speak! Well, then, am I to go back to that stupid party, or shall I stop and see Susan to-night? She won't be long now. Come I must have an answer."

Then Letty raised her face from its determined looking into the fire, and said:

"Stop."

When Miss Scott came into the room, tired, and perhaps a little cross at her cousin's defection, the first thing she saw was the defaulter himself rising up to meet her, taking Letty's hand in his with a movement of tenderness, which Susan understood only too well, and coming towards her.

"Oh!" said Miss Scott, "is that it? Well, Edward, in such a case I say nothing about your want of politeness. And Letty—come here."

Miss Scott put her hand on Letty's shoulder, and turning her face to the light, looked into it steadily.

"For all that," she said, "you are but a child yet, Letty. Try your best to understand him, and make him happy; and you, Edward, be forbearing with her, and remember my words. She is too young for you."

Then Miss Scott wished Edward good-night, or rather good morning, sent him away, and turned once again to her step-sister.

"Letty," said she, "don't think me unkind; but take my advice. Beware of the first quarrel; don't expect life to be all roses and sunshine, and always remember that Edward is wiser than you. Good night."

Letty went off to dream it all over again, and Miss Janet, looking after her, exclaimed in mingled amazement and glee:

"So we shall have a wedding in the house! And to think that just before I went I was pitying her for having to spend so dull an evening!"

"Yes," said Miss Susan, dryly, "you generally find that I know best in the end. Go to bed, Janet; you are tired, and I have a great deal to think of."

Alexandra, Princess of Wales, has just passed her 35th birthday. It is one of the sad consequences of royal station that queens and princesses are obliged to see every succeeding birthday chronicled and celebrated; unlike the comparitively humble Angelina, they can't remain at 25 for ten years. But of this fair Danish princess it must be said that succeeding seasons leave her only more fair, and the charm of her simple, kindly, gracious ladyhood grows greater day by day. She was never prettier than now.

BRIC-A-BRAC.

UMBRELLAS IN PARIS.—In Paris shops of tobacconists are agencies for the loan of umbrellas. Any one caught in a shower may procure one by depositing its value as security, returning it the next day to any tobacconist's shop, an account being kept between them.

CHINESE SAMPANERS.—The boats called sampans are each the habitation in China, of at least one family of fresh-water sailors. Sometimes they contain the representatives of several generations, from the great grandfather and grandmother to the new-born babe. All have to pass their whole lives on board together, cooped up in that narrow space which, more frequently than not, they are obliged to share with passengers. Their life is a hard one, constantly exposed to sun and rain, often up to their waists in water, when they have to push their sampan off a sand bank where it has grounded. Descendants of a peculiar race, they have always been kept at arm's-length by the Chinese. They can neither possess, nor even dwell on land; they have the run of the water, and that is all.

A LOAF OF BREAD.—A loaf of bread is the basis of some curious superstitions in Europe, special ill luck being attached to the turning of the loaf upside down. In Scotland this is accounted for by a legend that Sir Walter Menteith, the betrayer of Wallace to the English, made this action the signal of attack, whence the reversing of a loaf in the presence of a Menteith was considered so deadly an insult as to cause more than one fatal duel in the old fighting days. The belief regarding a reversed loaf exists in Germany. The Russians hold this superstition so firmly that you have only to turn a loaf upside down in any native village to see the whole company dash at it and reverse it, explaining that when the flat side is exposed the devil comes and seats himself upon it, and is not to be dislodged without a victim of some kind.

THE SENSE OF SMELL.—The intensity and delicacy of the sense of smell vary in different individuals and races. In some it is wonderfully sensitive. An Englishman tells of a woman who predicted storms, several hours in advance, from the sulphurous odor which she perceived in the air. A young American, who was deaf, dumb, and blind, became a good botanist simply by the sense of smell. It is, however, in some of the lower animals that we find the sense most highly developed. Smell is with some of them like an eye, which sees objects, not only where they are, but where they have been. The keen scent of the dog is well known. Humboldt mentions that when, in his travels in South America, it was desired to attract condors, all they had to do was to slaughter an ox or a horse, and in a short time the odor attracted a number of these birds, though none were visible previously. Of birds, waders have the largest olfactory nerves, and their sense of smell is most highly developed.

THE BEAR AT THE ALTAR.—A singular anecdote is related in connection with the plague in Norway. At the beginning of the fourteenth century it attacked one district with such severity as to entirely depopulate the country for miles round. About two hundred years afterwards a peasant was one day hunting a bear in that part of the country. Having discharged an arrow at the animal, it missed its mark but, flying onwards, struck against something which gave back a ringing sound. Curious to discover what was the cause of the strange circumstance, the hunter searched and found a church hidden among the trees. The arrow had struck against the bell of the clock in the church steeple. This was the ancient church of Hedal, which had stood unknown since the visitation of the plague, and in the lapse of time a large forest had grown up and concealed the sacred building from the eyes of men. The most singular part of the story is, that the hunter entered the church and slew the bear at the altar, where it had taken refuge. The bear's skin is still preserved in the vestry of the church.

PORTUGUESE SHOPS.—In Portugal, shops are lighted from the door, and have no windows. The signs for different trades are hung out of these doorways. At one door, for instance, you see a dozen strips of printed cottons tied to a small stick, and fluttering like the ribbons on a recruiting sergeant's hat. This tells you that a linen draper stands ready inside with tape and cottons. Farther on, a small bundle of fagots a bunch of onions, a few roots of garlic, and two or three candles dangle from another stick and denote a grocer. A shoemaker's sign is a bunch of leather shreds; and a hatter's is a painted hat. A butcher ties up a bundle of empty sausage skins, or a rude drawing of an ox having his horn sawed off, the saw as large as the man who uses it. Over a milkman's door hangs a crooked red cow. A green bough which resembles a branch of arbutus, indicates a wine shop, and, by the addition of a sprig of box, you learn that spirits are sold there. In other shops you see a small board suspended from a little stick, with words signifying "good wine and spirits," coarsely painted on it. The names of the shopkeepers are not over their doors, as with us.

NEVER SAY FAIL.

BY M. A. L.

Never say fail, but be up with the lark.
And turn every stone from daylight to dark;
For the fickle jade Fortune oft hides her face
In out of way places, the hardest to trace.

If you fall by the way, get up with a smile,
For through life you must tramp many a mile
O'er uneven paths which perplex and delay,
Success which may be even then on the way.

Never say fail, if your health and your brain
Have been by the fates allowed to remain;
Add energy, hope, and a hearty good-will,
And you'll soon reach the top of the steepest hill.

Onward and upward the motto must be,
With heart and with hand joined fraternally,
Determined to conquer and weather the gale,
You must if your watchword is "Never say fail."

VERA;

—OR,—

A Guiltless Crime.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL CARLISLE," ETC.

CHAPTER LIX.

MRS. GRESHAM-FAULKNER'S carriage stopped before that lady's handsome house in Stratton Street, and Vivian, alighting, offered his hand to Adeline.

"Then I may certainly expect you to morrow?" she said, as she stepped on to the pavement.

"I am sure to find you alone?"

"Quite sure. I will refuse all other visitors."

"You are too kind. Then *au revoir*."

He raised his hat as the hall door opened, bowed, and descended the steps, and, as he turned towards Piccadilly, his lips curved in stern irony. "Poor puppet," was his thought, "she will dance as I pipe; and yet she dislikes me, though not for my own sake, but, I would gage all the broad lands of Chandos, for my brother's. So much I will discover to-morrow. Ha, Percy Everest!"

Entering Stratton Street at that moment, Everest came face to face with Vivian Devereux; and an involuntary start and change of color, an instinctive droop of the eyes, betrayed to Devereux's keen glance that the encounter was, to the sometime guest of Chandos Royal, anything but a pleasant one. The last time Everest had seen Vivian Devereux in his own identity he had hurled at him a brutal taunt, and Devereux had promised to remember it. Was it a reminder of that taunt and of that promise that flashed into the haughty features, as, disdaining to ignore the man he despised, Vivian bowed slightly, raised his hat, and passed on? Everest read—or thought he read—something of the menace in the quick glance of the brilliant hazel eyes, even in the marked *hauteur* of the salute; and his heart quailed. He looked after the tall figure till it vanished round the corner.

"I would that you were caged!" he muttered. "What were you doing in Adeline's house? Smitten with her? Her vanity would swallow such an idea; but who else would believe it? I must see to this."

He went on quickly and knocked at Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner's door. He was at once admitted, and ascended to the drawing-room unannounced, for he was understood to be a privileged friend. Adeline turned with a start from the mirror.

"You, Percy?" she said, in no complimentary tone. "What has brought you—and what is the matter?"

"I hardly expected," returned Everest, looking fixedly at the handsome widow, "to see Vivian Chandos-Devereux coming from this house."

She was a match for him, if not for Devereux. She answered, coolly drawing off her gloves the while—

"I see nothing strange in it, Percy. I know him as Count Saint Leon. I met him in the Park; he came up to me and spoke to me. I could hardly do less than offer him a seat in my carriage. How can I show him that I hate him and his? If you let him see that you fear his suspicions, that will be the way to excite them."

"How do you know they are not already excited?"

"Bah—how should they be? 'Tis conscience makes cowards of us all,'" she answered, piqued at the assumption that her own attractions could have no weight in the scale. "Why should it be anything in itself extraordinary that Vivian Devereux should come here? He believes me to have been Vera's friend. And, if he did suspect anything, how is he to discover it? Am I likely"—here her face flushed—"to make him, of all men, my confidant?"

"Adeline," said Everest almost roughly, "you talk sheer folly. You are playing with fire in suffering anything like intimacy with Chandos-Devereux; and, if he effects any regard for yourself, beware of him. He has proved himself a splendid dissimulator, and, if you are vain enough to suppose that your image would rest in his mind for a moment, when he loves such a woman as Vera Calderon——. It is perhaps useless to argue with you on any principles of common sense, for I do not suppose you would be capable of entertaining them. Common sense never was your *forte*."

"It appears then," said Mrs. Faulkner nonchalantly, "that you have wasted your time in coming here. You are pleased to regard Vivian Devereux as a beautiful Mephistopheles, and myself as the mere plaything of his will. You may think what you will; but I am constrained to inform you that I am in no sense beholden to you, and must decline to accept your dictation. You do not think me worthy of sufficient confidence to tell me why it is needful to keep Vivian Devereux at an immeasurable distance; and so I shall take my own course. I hate him, but he is useful to me; he will make me the fashion.

"To call to-morrow! You do not receive to-morrow, do you?"

"Of course not. I shall not receive for at least another month. I must show some feeling for 'my dear friend' Miss Calderon"—with a sneer. "I receive Vivian Devereux—and him only. You are my brother, Percy," she added, going close up to him; "but I don't know what right that gives you to control my actions; nor am I aware that I have anything to hope or to fear from you."

"Adeline, you are mad—foolish—and worse than foolish!"

"Take care, Percy Everest!" said the woman, in a suppressed voice. "Do not say too much, lest I show you plainly that I am mistress here, by forbidding you ever to cross this threshold again. I can guard the secret which too nearly concerns my own honor—on the keeping of which also rests my whole and only worldly career—even supposing that Vivian Devereux has any wish to drag it from me." She paused a moment, and, as Everest made no rejoinder, added, in a changed tone—"I think we had best close this interview. You can remain to dinner if you choose to draw the subject; but, if not, then you can leave me."

Everest laid his hand upon the door.

"I select the latter course," he said. "You have been warned. See that you do not singe your wings in the candle round which you flutter. It is well to be 'the fashion'—to have your house known as favored by the most famous man of the day—possibly to have your name linked with his in no creditable fashion. Even this would perhaps hardly injure you; it would add piquancy to the whole affair. But you may have to pay heavily for the game you are playing with Marmaduke Devereux's brother!"

With these words he passed out, shutting the door with no gentle hand; and Adeline was left to her own reflections. Her brother—for, though it did not suit his purposes or hers, that their relationship should be known to the world, Adeline Faulkner and Percy Everest were brother and sister—had not taken a course likely to conciliate her wayward and vain disposition. He was shrewd and keen, but he lacked many of the essential qualities of a metaphysician; and where he should have soothed he threatened, where he should have been persuasive he was harsh. He forgot, too, in giving vent to a naturally arbitrary temper, that his sister was at once obstinate and vain, and instinctively, where she could safely do so, delighted to make a cheap show of his independence. Even Everest's sharpest taunt had no terror for Adeline; on the contrary, she was one of those women who find something exciting in the suspicion of a fashionable intrigue, so long as it stops short of a scandal. If she had a good reason for wincing from such an idea in connection with Chandos-Devereux's name of all names, it did not weigh for an instant against the practical advantage and the triumph of vanity and wounded pique to be gained by intimate association with him. Adeline did not stay to analyse—she was not indeed given to self-analysation—the truth that Vivian had already acquired an influence over her not easy to shake off. He had spoken to her during the drive from the park as to Vera's friend; he had conveyed to her—less by actual words than by the more subtle messengers of look, tone, and manner—that, though he shunned all other society, he could find sympathy and comfort in hers; the stern gravity of his face softened as he spoke to her; and in every inflection of his singular voice there was the ring of that respectful devotion, half gallant, which some women are capable of inspiring in men younger than themselves in years, but which in truth Adeline Faulkner could no more have really implanted in the heart of Vivian Devereux than she could have altered the course of the planets, or changed at will the tides of the ocean.

She robed herself the next day in her most becoming attire to receive her distinguished guest. She rejoiced, with a pitiful vanity, to observe, as she gazed forth, half hidden by the curtain, from the drawing-room window, that Lady Dalrymple, who lived on the opposite side of the street, saw Vivian Devereux ascend the steps; that Lord Sydney Tollemache, driving past at the moment, saw him also, for he leaned out and waved his hand. She turned from the window with a flush on her face, and a brighter sparkle than even *belladonna* had imparted to her eyes; and, as she stood waiting for her guest in the full soft light of wax-tapers, the crimson draperies of the apartment throwing into clear and strong relief the pale amber of her satin robes, she certainly formed a picture of a very handsome woman; and so Vivian Devereux thought as he entered the room. But, oh, how poor and earthly in comparison to the sunlit beauty of Vera Calderon! Instead of a pleasure, it was almost a shock to his sense to see that figure, so deliberately posed for effect in a carefully-chosen light, like a portrait put up for sale; and, when he bent low over the white ringed hand, never did outward homage more utterly belie the heart.

"You see I have kept my word," she said; "though, indeed, of course"—seating herself on a lounge near the fire, and lowering her eyes while she spoke rather hesitatingly—"I do not receive yet."

"May I then," said Vivian, taking the vacant place beside her, "count myself privileged?"

"Yes, Sir Vivian, for—for Vera's sake."

The man's heart leaped up with a fierce throb to hear her false lips speak thay name, to him so sacred, and speak it in hipocrisy. Yet he said softly, with a light touch of pain in his tone—

"For her sake only? Have I won no way in your regard? If so, my task is but hardly begun, for I would fain possess the right to say that I am among the friends of one who loved Vera, and who——" He paused, bit his lip, and added a little hurriedly, "The world gave me all things, Mrs. Faulkner, but that which—was it perhaps in perversity?—I most yearned for. I have had so few friends—I am jealous of friendship. May I try to win yours—not only for Vera's sake, but for my own?"

Vivian Devereux ask this from her! She scarcely checked the passionate exclamation that rose to her lips. She did not, could not, control the instinct that made her shrink away, fear mingling with hatred, as she felt, rather than definitely knew, that the resentment that would have trampled on the very word "friend" in connection with the name of Devereux was held down by the power of his presence—the spell of his influence. If he had but seen the light that leaped into those dark eyes watching her so keenly, so intently, she might have heeded Vera's warning. The first arrow had told; and, with the skill of a practised marksman, Vivian followed up his advantage before she could recover the false step she had made.

"Forgive me," he said earnestly, "have I presumed too much? Ah, dare I reproach you because, by your kindness, your sympathy, your love for one so dear to me—even while your mind condemned, your heart pleading for her—you helped me to bear the burden laid upon me, and gave me the hope too hastily expressed?"

Admirably constructed were those two speeches to make the desired impression; in the first was the pain, the eagerness for sympathy, the confidence half given, half withheld, the pause when enough had been said to intimate the idea of a deeper than merely collateral interest, the pleading for friendship; in the second, humility, trust—in the reproach itself the aroma of a superb flattery. What wonder that this woman was as clay in the potter's hands to such a master of all the arts to win? It was well indeed that Vivian Devereux was not the profligate rumor and wilful slander had called him.

Adeline had recovered herself, and half turned towards her companion again.

"It startled me," she said, "that you should ask for the friendship of one who, it may seem, has wronged you by believing the woman you love guilty, while you acquit her. Yet——" She faltered a moment, still struggling with the conflicting forces within her. "But," she then continued, "you will not condemn; you do me justice—let me say it—no more than justice, in reminding me of my love for Vera; how my heart is wounded because it cannot follow its own dictates. So, if you value my friendship, it—no, I will not say it is not yours, but you may try to win it if you will."

Vivian rose abruptly, as if moved by some emotion deeper than he cared to show, and crossed the room.

"One victory scored," he said inwardly. "She hates me; and, by Heaven, she threw up a well-constructed earthwork to guard the fort I had demolished! She hates me—shrinks from my homage with more than hatred—with horror, as she would do if my vague suspicion is correct. I believe she is a passive, not an active agent in this crime; but she knows enough for Vera to buy her silence. Perhaps, then, she may be bought by a higher bid, but my course is the most sure. I can force confession from her when the time is ripe, and it soon will be."

He came back to the sofa, and, sitting down, laid his hand gently on that of his hostess.

"Believe me," he said, "that I shall strive to the uttermost; and, if I fail, I shall know that I am unworthy."

"Nay, nay, the fault might lie with me."

"How so?" said Devereux quickly. "You could not—I know it—misunderstand me."

"I trust not—at least, if I could do so now, I think I could not after I knew you better."

"You underrate the power of your own sympathy. But I have your promise; if it is unknightly to hold a lady to her promise, own that I have some—much excuse."

"You flatter me in claiming excuse."

"They say," said Vivian, "that truth is often flattery."

"Sir Vivian," said Adeline, looking for a second full in his face, "'they say'—as you know—that you were once—well, I will say it plainly, a *roue*. Do you comprehend why I repeat that to you now?"

"Because," said Vivian quietly, "I am 'courtly, gentle'—because I have 'all the graces that win hearts to break them.'"

He saw—for he was covertly watching her—a sudden slight dilation of the eye, a quiver of the lid, a passing spasm over the lips, and quick compression; and her fingers began to play a hasty indefinite tune on her knee to hide their trembling.

"What are you quoting from," she said, with a short laugh, "or are you drawing on your imagination?"

"No; those were the actual words an old woman once said to me at Chandos Royal. I thought little of them, but more of the prophetic words she added, for they have come to pass—at least in part."

"Prophetic words!"

Did his fine ear detect the least shade of anxiety in her tone?

"Ay, prophetic," he said gloomily. "Perhaps the woman was distraught; perhaps she had good reason for the hatred she expressed against my house; but she had no cause of hatred against me, by Heaven!"

He started to his feet. Adeline sprang up, with a look of almost wild terror.

"What is it? What do you mean? Speak!" she cried, in a sharp piercing voice.

"Nothing—forgive me," Vivian muttered, sinking back again and pressing his hand to his forehead. Then, recovering himself with an apparent effort, he turned and bent down to his companion, who was still—he could see it—agitated, though she strove to hide it. "I startled you," he said pleadingly. "Pardon—a thousand pardons. It was but a sudden vague idea."

"You are still enigmatical—you did startle me"—she said the last words in explanation, for she was conscious that her voice trembled.

"Mrs. Faulkner, forgive me if I say no more at present. After all, I may be wronging the dead."

"The dead, Sir Vivian?"

"My brother Marmaduke."

There was a moment's pause; then Adeline lifted her hand to her face and turned aside a little.

"I think I understand," she said; "the woman may have had, as you say, good cause to hate the name of Devereux. But—pardon me, I have no right to ask anything——"

"The right of sympathy, Mrs. Faulkner."

"I was going to ask what sort of woman she was."

"An old woman—bent with infirmity, I should think. She was apparently quite of the peasant class, although her language hardly belonged to that class."

"Some of the gipsies," said Adeline, "get hold of very fine phrases. But, if she was what you describe her——"

"She might have had a daughter," said Vivian drily.

"True," observed his companion; and he noted that she drew silently a long deep breath. "But do you in any way connect this old woman with the murder?"

"No; if she had been guilty, why should Vera protect her?"

"Why indeed? Had you ever seen this woman before, or have you seen her since?"

"I saw her first when I rode through Pengarth after my election to Parliament. She spurned the money I offered her. Since the day she spoke to me in the park I have not seen her; but I hold to the opinion that she was not what she seemed. It was an old story perhaps. Let us pass to a more congenial subject."

He seemed as if he would fain shake off some disagreeable impression, and he observed that his companion gladly turned from the conversation.

Vivian Devereux was far too accomplished a diplomatist to keep too long on dangerous ground—above all, to leave Mrs. Faulkner with an impression that the interview had closed with reminiscences or conjectures concerning a past on which she had no wish to throw any light. He devoted the remainder of his visit to ingratiating himself more and more with his fair hostess; and, when he took leave, it was with the promise to see her again shortly.

"And you will not forget me," she said coquettishly, "for one younger and fairer?"

"*Foi de gentilhomme*, for which, if that be not enough, inclination is sufficient guarantee," said Vivian, too earnestly for the mere language of compliment. "And you forget I do not go into general society."

CHAPTER LX.

"IT'S very odd," said Florrie Morton, a fortnight later, laying down the *Beau Monde*, and folding her hands with a sigh.

"What is odd, my dear?" asked Lady Constance, over her chocolate.

"I was thinking of Vivian, mamma. I give him up. He utterly puzzles me. Look here. This paragraph is meant for him—and it's what people will say." And she took up the paper again, and read aloud, "'So Stratton Street is the fashion. No wonder; Greek Street, Soho, would be the fashion if 'Rohan *fe sue*'—you know they used to call him that at college, mamma—'was often seen there. At the theatre the other night she was the observed of all observers. He snubs Mayfair and St. James's—has not even been down to his property; the sweets of friendship keep him in town.'"

"Abominable paper!" exclaimed Lady Constance. "But, really, Vivian is incomprehensible. He used to be so fond of you; yet, after coming once, he writes an excuse when I ask him again, and the same afternoon he goes to a private view at the Halford Gallery, and Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner is there. And she was no friend of Vera Calderon's. If he wants her friends, are there not Lady Landport, Lady Kynaston, the Duchess of Marston, a host of women of *ton*, and high-souled women too. No, Fiorrie"—with a decided air Lady Constance set down her cup—"I don't like this Vivian at all."

"Mamma," flashed out Fiorrie, up in arms for her favorite directly her vague suggestion was taken up in earnest and made tangible, "there is no harm in it! You can't think for a moment that Vivian would ever be disloyal to Vera; and, if he were a perfect Lothario, how could he dream of such a woman as that Mrs. Faulkner beside Vera!"

When one lady puts the demonstrative adjective before another lady's name, there is no more to be said; and so Fiorrie appeared to think, for she left the room in a very disturbed state of mind.

"It's odd, isn't it," said Clem Willoughby to Lord Sydney Tollemache at the Travellers—"about Chandos-Devereux, I mean? He can't be carrying on a flirtation with Mrs. Faulkner?"

"I shouldn't have thought it of him," said Lord Sydney dubiously; "would you, Cascelles? You're the most favored of us."

"No" said Lord Cascelles, in a tone that conveyed "and I don't believe he is." And he went on with his paper.

He knew from Vivian's own lips that he had a motive in cultivating the society of Mrs Faulkner; and he was satisfied to know no more than that.

"I wonder he stays in town at all," added Clem. "He mightn't care about going down to Chandos Royal; but he might go abroad."

"I can see a good reason for his being in town," put in another. "We know he doesn't believe Miss Calderon to be guilty; and he's not one to sit down and weep beneath the willow, nor yet tell all the world what he is about."

"Ah, y-e-s—I didn't think of that," said little Clem, who seldom thought much about anything, so the omission was not strange.

* * * * *

Adeline Gresham-Faulkner was the fashion. The Duchess of Woodstock passed her in the Park and bowed graciously, though she said to Ella, "What can Sir Vivian Devereux find in that woman to attract him?" and Ella replied, "Artful creature!" as if Adeline was the spider and Devereux the fly. Ladies, who since Vera's disappearance from the sphere of fashion, had begun to "turn the cold shoulder" to Mrs Faulkner now sought her society. She found herself courted, caressed. Like the butterfly, she lived in the sunshine; she delighted in the flowers in which poison might lurk; she laughed at the paragraph which had grieved and perplexed Fiorrie Morton. When Percy Everest once more warned her, she defied him, and forbade him the house. She felt secure: Vivian Devereux suspecting nothing. She had found that out on the first day he called; and since then he had made no allusion to the past, though he saw her so often. And Percy himself was staggered. Was it possible that Vivian was really attracted by an evanescent admiration for Adeline Faulkner? Everest's own incapacity for entertaining any strong affection blunted his power of estimating character in this instance, as it had done with regard to Vera Calderon; but he could do nothing, and so ground his teeth in silence when he heard of the dashing Mrs. Faulkner and Sir Vivian Devereux.

Vera Calderon in her prison was not wholly in the dark. She saw by the papers something of this game for life and death; and she could read between the lines.

"What will be the end?" was her inward cry. "He is on the right path, and every step is taken with deliberate purpose. When the time is ripe, he will strike the final blow; and what he learns from her will place the truth in his grasp. Is it better so? No; but I am helpless. I dare not even warn her now. She must be utterly under his influence, enough to make her perhaps betray to him that I had written."

The *Beau Monde* lay before her; she took it up and looked again at the paragraph that had excited so much comment.

"The fashion now," she said slowly. "But, if the border-land be passed, if the world should begin to link name and name in such manner as to cause men to laugh and shrug their shoulders, then she will feel the reaction. But Vivian will not let it come to that."

Almost at that moment Vivian Devereux threw the "society" journal across the room, and with a grave stern smile on his lips rose from his seat by the table in his chambers in the Albany. Alba, lying on the leopard-skin on the hearth, looked up wistfully and laid back his ears; but Vivian just now hardly noticed even his favorite.

"It is the turn of the tide," he said within himself, "and I must take it before it ebbs again. She is the fashion now; the sycophants who call her *mauvais ton* are bowing at her footstall because I am the fashion, and in the sun of my favor she lives and moves and has her being. I hear now the murmur of the breeze which will become a hurricane; a week, and it may be too late. I have worked for this hour, and I will not let it pass and find me still without the clue I seek."

He sank down upon the chair from which he had risen and covered his face for a moment.

"Oh, Vera, my heart, what agony is in every second spent in this wretched task! How the false smile, the look, the tone, that carry the semblance of homage to another shrine seem like a wrong done to thee! I shrink in horror even from the idle gossip that marvels how, while my betrothed wife lies in prison, I can dangle in the train of an Adeline Faulkner."

Alba rose and, softly whining, laid his honest head on his master's knee; and that loving sympathy roused Vivian. He dropped his hands and caressed the noble animal fondly.

"Always faithful," he said, with a half-sad smile, and then he took up a letter that lay on the table and glanced over it again.

"'Only a few friends,'" he said musingly. "She hopes I will drop in, and not mind 'so very few.' She wants in her own house to show that Vivian Chandos-Devereux, Vera Calderon's betrothed, is not blind to Adeline Faulkner's smiles. The bittern is proud of her falcon lover, yet fears him too. Lost to all womanhood she were indeed if it were not so, for I truly believe——" He paused abruptly, and an expression of intense pain contracted his brow; but there was no sign of relenting in his steadfast purpose.

"I little thought once," he said, with a bitter sigh, "that Vivian Devereux would ever need to stab a woman, and deal the blow where the wound is the keenest and cannot be warded off."

He drew a paper and pen towards him and wrote—

"Dear Mrs. Faulkner,—Forgive me that I cannot accept your kind invitation. It is trying enough to be in London at all; I shrink from even the quiet circle of which you ask me to form one. In you I can find sympathy—but those others! Instead of to-morrow I shall take my chance of finding you alone this evening."

"That will do," he said, as he touched the bell for Alphonse. "I trust this evening will be my last in Stratton Street."

CHAPTER LXI.

THERE was a real happiness for Adeline Faulkner to be able to answer the Hon. Mrs. Wyndham's urgent request that she would stay for five o'clock.

"Indeed I should be so glad; but I expect Sir Vivian Devereux this evening. A note came from him just before I left home to say that he would look in on the chance of finding me at home; and you know, I cannot disappoint him."

"Or yourself either, my dear. And to-morrow?"

"He declines—such a nice note, but too flattering to show you"—with a little laugh. "*Au revoir*. You will come to-morrow?"

"I hope so, dear."

And Mrs Gresham-Faulkner departed, while Mrs. Wyndham, who had accepted the invitation to Stratton Street only in the hope of meeting Sir Vivian Devereux, meditated on the expediency of having another engagement and also "pulled to pieces" her "dear Mrs. Faulkner," and decided that her conduct would soon bring scandal upon her name.

"After all," said the charitable lady, "she is one of those whose goodness is due more to the appearances than to character. It is my belief—and always has been—that she might be won; but I really cannot imagine that Vivian Devereux can think the game worth the candle."

Was Mrs. Wyndham's estimate—though perhaps partly prompted by pique—a true one? Was it this knowledge that softened to Devereux's chivalrous nature the pain of laying bare a terrible wound?

It was with strangely mingled feelings that Adeline Faulkner returned home; even on the very threshold she half regretted that she had not remained with Mrs. Wyndham. Yet, when the footman told her that Sir Vivian Devereux was in the drawing-room, she thought she could not have forgiven herself if she had missed seeing him.

A quarter of an hour later she entered the presence of her visitor, with her most charming smile and her most fascinating manner.

"I am sorry," she said," "that you should have had to wait. I hope it has not been for long? I hastened home as fast as I could."

"The time seemed long," answered Devereux, in a tone that pointed the words, as he took her outstretched hand; "but by the clock I have not been here more than a quarter of an hour. I hope you have not torn yourself away from some charming friend on my account?"

"It was not tearing myself away, Sir Vivian," said the widow, with a half sigh and a half smile, but with—he saw at once—a certain embarrassment in her manner.

"No? May I take that as a positive or a negative compliment? Was the friend's society so little valued, or"—in a lower tone—"mine so much?"

He was standing by the mantelpiece—a favorable position for watching her face—and she sat on a low lounge, the color of which well set off that of her draperies. Wincing visibly, but flushing too in pleased vanity, she answered with a fleeting upward look—

"You must not press a woman too closely for a reason or a sentiment; but—are not you too a friend?"

Was he? Vivian was silent. He shrank from the assumption of that sacred name; but he could have put the question aside. Silence produced the exact effect he wished to produce. Adeline could hardly think he counted himself less than a friend, and was held mute by conscience; the alternative, so flattering to her restless vanity, was sure to take possession of her mind. Was there a struggle in Vivian Devereux's heart? Was he perplexed when the problem was thus suddenly presented to him? Had he ever seriously considered to what his homage to a beautiful woman, whose influence over himself he had perhaps never exactly measured, was leading him? Or did he know well his own mind and purpose? Was Vivian Devereux so deliberate and heartless a profligate that he could have carried insult in his heart while so carefully banished from eye and lip—insult, too, that so cruelly wronged the woman to whom the heart should be entirely given, and whom he had professed to believe innocent of all offence? The thought was like a poisoned arrow to Adeline; and yet it was less for herself, as a woman, that she put it from her in terror and dismay than because the man before her was Vivian Devereux. It would have been a triumph, though it might be evanescent, to win even such tainted homage; but from him—Marmaduke Devereux's brother! She dared not look at her companion. She had played with fire, and, lo, the fire was her master! A firmer, stronger spirit would have made a way of escape—would have "assumed a virtue if it had it not"; but Adeline was not capable of this. She was ready of resource in petty intrigues; she failed when called upon to meet great occasions.

With white scared face, she rose hastily, then paused; for it struck her that she was putting herself in a false position by assuming too much, and she tried to effect a retreat.

"I am pressing you too hard now," she said with a laugh that she felt sounded hollow and unreal; "though you asked for my friendship, did you not? Well, let us change the subject." And she turned towards the table. But Vivian's detaining hand was on her arm—a light, yet imperative touch, to which she instinctively yielded while she shrank from it.

"No," he said almost sternly, "we cannot change the subject. You cannot gather the flowers and spurn them when their fragrance ceases to please you. You cannot play with a man's life as if it were some toy—the fashion of a season—to be a part of your *attirail* for a few weeks, and cast aside when the caprice that rules your world decrees something new."

Adeline Faulkner flung off the speaker's hand as if it had been an asp.

"This from you!" she gasped. "From you, Vivian Devereux! Oh, horror, from you!"

If she could but have seen, or, seeing, read aright, the look that flashed into the man's dark eyes! For the burden of the cry was not "This to me," but "This from you."

He laughed bitterly.

"From me!" he said. "Why not? Because my betrothed wife lies in prison? Because I love her still? What then? You knew this when you suffered me to be to you, if less than a lover, more than a friend. Friendship between such as I am and such as you are! Bah! A pretty fiction for the halcyon days of the Hotel Rambouillet! But did you dream of acting out that drama now? You did not. You may have lured me on to suit your own purposes—to be made the fashion; but you should have known a Chandos-Devereux better than to suppose that he would be made a mere puppet to forward a woman's schemes."

She turned upon him fiercely now.

"I should have known a Chandos-Devereux better than to have expected constancy and honor in him! Was I worthy to be Vera Calderon's friend; and yet, in your eyes, only worthy of a homage that insults and degrades?"

"Your friendship with Vera Calderon," Devereux answered more calmly, and still keeping up the appearance of belief in a story now cast aside, "was a fiction. You bound yourself to her by ties of gratitude which such a nature as hers could not ignore, though they were irksome—as you well knew. For the rest, your words condemn you!"

"My words? What do you mean? In Heaven's name, Chandos-Devereux," she said, facing him now with real dignity, with passionate indignation, "what do you believe me to be?"

"Answer me this!" said Vivian, laying on her wrist a grasp she could not shake off, and looking straight into her eyes. "What do you know of any who bears or bore the name of Devereux, of whom you once professed to know nothing, that you speak of them with such hatred? Who of my blood has ever wronged you or yours?"

"Who?"

The word was uttered with a hoarse whisper; the woman was trembling from head to foot; the flush on her cheek had faded to deathly pallor, giving a ghastly aspect to the faint tinge of rouge; her eyes wavered and fell. Watching her, Vivian—as though the suspicion had but just burst upon him—suddenly loosed his hold, and recoiled with a stifled exclamation of horror.

"In mercy tell me!" he said, in agitation not at all simulated. "You cannot—dare not keep silent now! I know too much or too little! Profligate I may be, but I am not so lost as to sue for more than friendship to the woman protected by the barrier of a brother's love, even though that love was not given to a wife! Your face, your action, betrays you!"

She had almost cowered before him, hiding her ghastly features in her hands; but at these last words she rallied to a desperate effort.

"Was there anything lacking," she said, "of villany in this evening's work that you should hurl at me so foul a charge, because, judging you by your own words and acts, I reproach you with the evil reputation you have earned in the world?"

"A clever subterfuge," said Vivian sternly, "but one can hardly account for all that has fallen from your lips—all that spoke yet more strongly in the cry with which you shrank from me but now. I am no longer in the dark; even as I speak, I recall things hardly noted at the time; and, as surely as I stand before you, I believe the woman who spurned my gold, the woman who cursed me and prophesied evil to me for my name's sake, is the woman the world knows as Adeline Faulkner. Spare yourself the falsehood of denial; I see the truth in your face; and by Heaven, before I leave this house to-night, I will have the whole truth!"

She stood looking at him; her eyes were dilated, and her hands worked convulsively.

"Do you threaten?" she said, almost in a whisper.

"Ay, threaten if you will!" He came close to her, and spoke in a low resolute tone. "You are in my power, Adeline Faulkner. You are in society, but your house is built on sand. A word from me will level its walls to the ground. I have but to hint that Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner—of whom, after all, nothing is known—was Marmaduke Devereux's mistress, and who among these titled dames who now receive you will even return your bow in the Park?"

"No, no!" cried Adeline frantically, clasping her hands. "You cannot—you cannot do this! You dare not assert the lie!"

"If it be a lie, show me the proofs," said Devereux, wholly unmoved. "If you were a wife, why have you so long forborne to claim the right? Drop all attempt to deny that you ever knew Marmaduke Devereux. The issue is simply this—were you wife or mistress? If you still refuse to answer me, you know the alternative!"

She was fairly brought to bay now; she knew she was in his power, the creature of his will—to-day in wealth and luxury, to-morrow an outcast, the gossamer web of status and reputation destroyed by a touch from that inflexible man.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

There is a proverb which says, "What can be done at any time is never done," and which applies especially to a class who have become slaves to the habit of procrastination, the habitual postponing of everything that they are not compelled by necessity to do immediately. Now delays are not only damaging to present prospects, but they are destructive of ultimate success. A dilatory man is not to be depended upon. The slightest defect is sufficient for him to disappoint you. If an *employé*, the sooner he is discharged the greater the advantage to the employer. There are those who may properly be called "afternoon men." They are always busy getting ready to go to work. In the morning they walk about, carefully inspect their duties, and say, "Plenty to do to-day! I must go to work this afternoon." About three o'clock they survey what they have not done, and exclaim, "One thing and another have prevented me from doing anything to-day. I'll leave it, and begin bright and early to-morrow morning."

THE NEWLY DEAD.

BY J. H. G.

Give her again to Earth!
There's safety there! She shall no more repine,
The fruit hath fallen from life's overloaded vine.
Where shall they find her now, the weary train
Of earth-emotions, racking heart and brain
At each new sorrow's birth?

Gone to the shadows—gone!
Oh! better thus! Who such a rest would break?
Who from the sleep of the grave's pillow wake
The weary-hearted? Beautifully flies
On that dead cheek the reflex of the skies
Whither the soul hath flown!

Her childhood lives again!—
Son, look upon thy mother—and rejoice,
Even while the gushing sob shall choke thy voice!
Look on her!—from the cold world's dungeon freed,
No more beneath oppression's lash to bleed—
The ransomed slave of Pain!

The Emperor's Choice.

BY C. B.

MICHAEL the Second lay in the sepulchral chapel erected by Justinian, in the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople. It was in the autumn of 829 that this emperor died, leaving the throne of the Eastern Empire to his son Theophilus.

Married at an early stage of his greatness to Euphrosyne, daughter of Constantine VI., Michael had suffered a degree of obloquy which he could not avert, in consequence of this marriage. Euphrosyne had already become a nun, when he accidentally saw her, as she was returning from matins, across the court-yard adjoining both convent and chapel. From this time her image haunted him, night and day; and when at length he came to the throne, his first act was to obtain a dispensation from the Patriarch, for the beautiful recluse to share it with him.

There were those who dared murmur against this desecration, as they termed it; and the sovereign's life was embittered, and perhaps his death hastened, by the reports that often reached him of the disapproval of his subjects. Euphrosyne, however, made as exemplary an empress as she had been irreproachable as a nun; and mourned her husband's death with as true a grief as if she had never abjured the world. All her remaining affections centered in her son, Theophilus, who ascended the throne when his father died, in October, 829.

To please the fastidious taste that characterised the new emperor, and, perhaps, to guard him against the temptation of invading the sacred precincts of the cloister for a wife, the empress assembled all the most beautiful and graceful among the maidens of Constantinople, to a *fete* in her own private apartments. Previous to their coming, she informed him of her object, and desired him to select a new empress from among the many fair and bright-born maidens who would grace it.

Perhaps it was only a whim that prompted his quick answer; but he eventually carried it out, in a way that accorded with his quaint and quiet humor. Seizing an apple of pure gold from among the costly ornaments of his mother's cabinet, he said, "Look, mother! I will openly present this apple to the maiden who most shall meet my approbation in your circle, this evening; and that maiden, whoever she may be, shall share with me the throne."

The empress approved, and they separated, to meet again when she should be surrounded by the flower of beauty and grace in her own apartment.

* * * * *

The evening shades were deepening into darkness, when a young and very beautiful girl, dressed with fairy lightness and taste, stood before the massive steel mirror which gave back her flashing eyes and crimson cheeks. She was robed in a long, trailing garment of transparent silver tissue, looped up at one side with a knot of white flowers. The shoulders were partially bare, and the short sleeve was gathered up by a single spray of delicate lilies. Across the bosom, the robe was drawn into graceful folds, parting in the centre, and decorated with flowers. The hair was braided into a heavy knot at the back of the head, and a wreath of tiny green leaves encircled the knot. Except the flowers, there was no decoration. All was in the strictest simplicity, but an air of indescribable elegance and refinement pervaded her whole appearance.

As she stepped from before the long mirror she met the eyes of a young man, bearing a strong family resemblance to her, fixing themselves earnestly and admiringly upon her.

"You will go with me, Justus?" she asked, as he approached her.

"If it is your pleasure, Theodora," was the reply, "I am only too happy to attend you." He bent towards her and whispered, "If I could but know that I might hope for your presence always——"

"Hush, Justus!" said she; "I think you must remember that the subject is forbidden as one likely to destroy the bonds of friendship between us."

"And is friendship all I must hope for?" he asked.

"All!" she replied. "Methinks it is a great boon, the true and pure friendship which I have heard described. Besides, are you not my own relative?—dearer than any save a brother? Sisters' children we are, Justus." And she laid her white hand upon his arm with a sisterly freedom that disarmed him of all resentment towards her. "You will go?" she asked again.

"Yes, Theodora—and as a brother only, if that is all you can desire me to be to you. But I shall make a sorry attendant."

The two passed out together, and just as they were about to enter the quaintly-decorated Greek chariot, another chariot, with wild, prancing horses, nearly ran against them.

"That is Eikasia's carriage," said Theodora, when her momentary fright was over. "Did you observe what a beautiful thing it is?"

"I saw that it was built in the form of a sea shell," she replied. "Eikasia has taste as well as beauty."

"Yes," said Theodora; "and oh, Justus! how grandly beautiful she is! how full of glorious strength and majesty! Do you know that I shrink away into nothing beside Eikasia? She seems to overshadow me with her commanding presence."

"And yet," said Justus, passionately, "one hair from thy golden braid exceeds her charms."

"Nonsense, Justus! Do you think me so vain as to be caught by such rhapsodies, my good cousin? Keep your fine speeches for finer ladies than I."

When Justus and Theodora entered the reception chamber of the empress, Eikasia was already there. She was dressed magnificently in a rich green robe, embroidered with gold stars. On her head she wore a coronet composed of gold and emeralds. Her train was three yards in length, and was of white Persian silk, bordered with gold stars on a green ground. A broad girdle, in which gold was curiously interwoven, confined her loose robe in the folds around her waist, and a chain of emeralds drooped from her white throat, setting off its exquisite fairness. A pale, olive hue was faintly lighted up with a struggling crimson, but it was the eyes that lighted up the wondrous face—the deep, passionate eyes, whose glances seemed absolutely to burn with the fires of the spirit within. The long lashes that shaded them rested on the cheek; and the dark eyebrows were pencilled so evenly, that every hair lay in its own place, and seemed as if it could not be spared from the general effect.

Eikasia's hair was of that peculiar tint of purplish black that is at once so rare and so beautiful; and, unlike Theodora's, she wore it in long curls, that fell over her face, partially concealing the passionate look that sometimes welled out from the very soul in the moments of her intensest enthusiasm.

Won by that look—for she wore it now—a person, entering the room, walked slowly past the others who were standing in groups, or reclining on seats about the apartments, and stayed his footsteps only when he reached the spot where she was standing.

Addressing her in the grave and sententious tone of the period, he said, "Woman is the source of evil."

Her quick eye caught sight of the golden apple. She divined immediately the cause of this, and the use to which he was to apply it, and her dark eyes glistened with a proud yet happy expression as she quickly answered, "But woman is also the source of much good."

She turned aside to speak to Theodora, but her words were bitter and sarcastic now—for there was an air of sweetness and purity in Theodora's face, that contrasted with her own passionate nature. The emperor, who saw it too, was disenchanted in a moment. All her beauty faded from her before his sight, and he turned away disenthralled.

What was it? Did her tones jar upon his nerves? or was he attracted to the other maiden, whose blushing cheek attested her modesty, and whose sparkling eyes proclaimed her intellectuality? Who knows, save by what followed? The apple quivered in his hand. He advanced—stopped—went on, in Corporal Trim's own fashion, hundreds of years afterwards, and placed the bright, shining fruit in the hand of the fair Theodora!

Never before had such a blow fallen on the self-complacency of Eikasia. The words died on her lips, and the tears forced themselves into those large, black orbs that burned so brightly a few moments before. It was like rain after lightning. She had not counted upon this. When the emperor had entered, she looked proudly around, and the memory of that last glance in the great steel mirror was still vivid enough to assure her that she would bear off the palm of beauty. Now, the veil had fallen from her eyes, and she saw another preferred before her!

A few moments of that forced gaiety which disappointed pride puts on, at first, to hide the keen pangs that are crushing it, and then Eikasia was gone; and the party, following her lead, as usual, broke up. At the door, Justus stood ready with a mantle of fine wool to guard Theodora from the night air. She was trembling all over with the strong excitement of the evening. Justus thought she was shivering, and he wrapped her up still closer. Could he have known that she was dead to him from that moment, the poor youth's constant heart would have bled deeply!

In the monastery of Santa Maria, Eikasia secluded herself from every eye save those of the good sisters and her confessor. She had felt the throb of ambition—she now wore the garb of humility. The brief day-dream had faded, but its going down had left none of those bright hues that the sun leaves at parting. Henceforth, life was painted for her in those sombre shades of grey that are too dull already to subside into any other tint. And while Eikasia composed and sang psalms, to cure the fever of a soul panting for the gift of love, Theodora was preparing to ascend the throne beside him who, had he not been emperor, would have equally shared her heart.

The Empress Euphrosyne, after her son's marriage, retired to a monastery to pass the remainder of her days; one sigh to the memory of Michael, and she was lost to the outer world.

Theodora accompanied the emperor on one of his visits to the neighboring convents. A nun attracted her notice by the height and beauty of her figure. Her face was almost entirely concealed by the broad bands which she, more than the others, had drawn closely around it. But the full red lips, unfaded and blooming still, and guarding a row of pearls of unexampled beauty, brought to her memory the proud Eikasia as she stood, waiting in the palace hall, for the distinction she was so sure would come to her.

Eikasia's eyes betrayed her emotion. The emperor spoke to her courteously without remembering her, and the "last straw" was laid on the pride that had been her ruling passion. She answered him in a low murmur that sounded little like the tone that so jarred upon his nerves when, years ago, the golden apple seemed so nearly within her reach.

Thus we struggle—ah! how often—like wounded birds, against the destiny that seems so cruel—yet how recklessly we fling away the golden fruit that might be ours; and somewhere away among dim cloisters in which we have hidden our grief, we sometimes catch a glimpse of our coveted prize in the hands of another! What wonder, then, if we beat the bars of the dreary cage in which we dwell!

"EAGLE AND CHILD."—The above having been adopted as the crest of the English Earls of Derby, its origin is a circumstance of no small curiosity. Sacheverell, in his "Survey of the Isle of Man," of which the Stanleys were for several ages kings and lords, holding it of the kings of England by grant of Henry the Fourth, by homage, and the service of a cast of falcons, payable on coronations. The Stanleys were kings as much as any tributary king whatsoever, making laws, etc. They appeared on a certain day in royal array, sitting in a chair covered with a royal cloth and cushions, with their visage to the east; the sword borne before them with the point upwards; with their barons, knights, and squires about them. Sir John Stanley, in the time of Richard the Second, was a chivalrous knight, famous for great prowess in arms in all parts of Europe. On his return, he was followed by a Frenchman, who challenged the whole English people to find his match. Sir John slew him in the king's presence. This act of his procured him such great favor among the ladies, that he won the affections of the young, rich, and beautiful heiress of Lathams. Sir John immediately vowed that it was not for her he had fought, and soon afterwards married her against the will of her friends. Shortly after, the lord of Latham and his lady being childless, as they were walking in their park, heard a child crying in an eagle's nest; they immediately ordered their servant to search the eyry, who presented them with a beautiful boy, in rich swaddling clothes. The good lady, looking upon it as a present from heaven, ordered it to be carefully educated, and called it Latham. The child was knighted by the name of Sir Oskytel Latham, and left sole heir of their vast estate. He had one daughter, named Isabella, who by marriage brought the honors of Latham and Knowsley, with many other lordships, to Sir John Stanley. Sir William Dugdale asserts that the child was the offspring of Sir John and a woman named Oskytel; but be this as it may, the crest has ever since been retained in the family.

Collectors of British postage stamps should be on the qui vive. The present postage-stamps will be superseded early next year. It has been found that the black obliterating mark can be taken out so well that the stamps can be used again without the certainty of detection. To obviate this, paper of thinner texture will be adopted similar to that of the receipt stamps: and it is not unlikely that the color will be altered. The old stamps will not be called in and the present store will of course be used up.

TALKERS.

A PROMINENT JOURNAL, writing on this subject, asks the question—Who does not like to hear a really good talker—whether in the public room or the private circle? Men may glibly quote the adage, 'Speech is silvern—but silence is golden;" yet it must be acknowledged that the silent man is, as a rule, at a great disadvantage, compared with his neighbor who can use his tongue well, and is as the phrase goes "good company."

On the subject of "talkers," an interesting book has been recently written, and in it we find the above classes and many others dwelt upon. Of many varieties, illustrations are given. In the part devoted to "the egotist" we have an excellent example of how one of those worthies was served:

"I was to dine with the Admiral to-night," said a naval lieutenant once; "but I have so many invitations elsewhere that I can't go."

'I am going, and I'll apologize," said a brother officer.

'O don't trouble yourself."

"But I must," said the officer; "for the Admiral's invitation, like that of the Queen, is a command."

'Never mind; pray don't mention my name," rejoined the lieutenant.

"For your own sake, I certainly will," was the reply.

At length the hero of a hundred cards stammered out:

"Don't say a word about it; I had a hint to stay away."

"A hint to stay away! Why so?"

"The fact is I—wasn't invited."

Egotists are an intolerable set of bores. Everything they say is interlarded with "I;" it is I, I, throughout. Into all conversations they drag allusions to themselves. In some cases their egotism is grotesque, but usually offensive. It should be part of education to put young persons on their guard against interlarding their conversation with "I." Lord Erskine was a great egotist. One day in conversation with Curran, he casually asked what Grattan said of himself. This was a splendid opportunity for Curran giving Lord Erskine an indirect set-down.

"Said of himself!" was Curran's astonished reply. "Nothing. Grattan speak of himself! Why, sir, Grattan is a great man. Sir, torture could not wring a syllable of self praise from Grattan; a team of six horses could not drag an opinion of himself out of him. Like all great men, he knows the strength of his reputation, and will never condescend to proclaim its march, like the trumpeter of a puppet-show. Sir, he stands on a national altar, and it is the business of us inferior men to keep up the fire and incense. You will never see Grattan stooping to do either the one or the other."

Curran objected to Byron's talking of himself as a great drawback on his poetry. "Any subject," he said, "but that eternal one of self! I am weary of knowing periodically the state of any man's hopes or fears, rights or wrongs. I would as soon read a register of the weather; the barometer up to so many inches to-day, and down so many inches to-morrow. I feel scepticism all over me at the sight of agonies on paper—things that come as regular and notorious as the full of the moon."

The following are amongst the illustrations of the grandiloquent style of talk, and with these we conclude our paper.

A minister—and one of the fraternity, namely the Rev. Paxton Hood, is quoted as the authority for the story—described a tear as "that small particle of aqueous fluid, trickling from the visual organ over the lineaments of the countenance, betokening grief."

Another minister, speaking in the presence of a few friends, who had met for the purpose of promoting the interests of an association, relieved himself in the following manner: "When I think of this organization with its complex powers, it reminds me of some stupendous mechanism which shall spin electric bands of stupendous thought and feeling, illuminating the vista of eternity with coruscations of brilliancy, and binding the mystic brow of eternal ages with a tiara of never-dying beauty; whilst for those who have trampled on the truth of Christ, it shall spin from its terrible form, toils of eternal funeral bands, darker and darker, till sunk to the lowest abyss of destiny!"

A certain native was once talking of Liberty, when he said: "White-robed Liberty sits upon her rosy clouds above us; the Genius of our country, standing on her throne of mountains, bids her eagle standard-bearer wind his spiral course, full in the sun's proud eye; while the Genius of Christianity, surrounded by ten thousands cherubim and seraphim, moves the panorama of the milky clouds above us, and floats in immortal fragrance—the very aroma of Eden through all the atmosphere!"

Farmers Crockett and Nichols quarreled about a hog, at Lindale, Mo., and agreed to settle the difficulty with knives. One had a dirk, and the other a less handy but larger pocket knife. Nichols was killed on the spot, and Crockett lived only two hours after the fight. Twenty seven cuts were counted on their bodies.

THE MERRY CHRISTMAS TIME.

BY GEORGE ARNOLD.

Green were the meadows with last summer's store,
The maples rustled with a wealth of leaves;
The brook went babbling to the pebbly shore,
Down by the old mill, with its cobwebbed door.
And the swallow-haunted eaves;
And all the air was warm, and calm, and clear,
As if cold winter never would come near.

Now the wide meadow-lands where then we strolled,
Are misty with a waste of whirling snow,
The ruined maples, stripped of autumn's gold,
Sigh mournfully and shiver in the cold,
As the hoarse north winds blow;
Yet something makes this frosty season dear—
The merry Christmas time is here.

The merry Christmas, with its generous boards,
Its firelit hearths, and gifts, and blazing logs,
Its pleasant voices uttering gentle words,
Its genial mirth attuned to sweet accord,
Its holy memories!
The fairest season of the passing year—
The merry Christmas time is here.

The sumachs by the brook have lost their red,
The mill-wheel in the ice stands dumb and still,
The leaves have fallen, and the birds have fled,
The flowers we loved in summer, all are dead,
And wintry winds blow chill;
Yet something makes the dreariness less drear—
The merry Christmas time is here.

Since last the panes were hoar with Christmas frost,
Unto our lives some changes have been given;—
Some of our barks have labored, tempest tossed,
Some of us, too, have loved, and some have lost,
Some found their rest in heaven;
So, humanly, we mingle smile and tear
When merry Christmas time is drawing near.

Then pile the fagots higher on the hearth,
And fill the cup of joy, though eyes be dim;
We hail the day that gave our Saviour birth,
And pray His spirit may descend on earth,
That we may follow Him;
'Tis this that makes the Christmas time so dear:
Christ in His love for us seems drawing near.

The Christmas Wreath.

BY C. B. H.

KATE SORREL and Ellis Wilmore had been engaged a whole year; yet the wedding seemed as far off as ever. Truth to tell, Katy was a flirt, and as exacting and wilful a little maiden withal as ever lovelorn swain had sighed for. They had met for the first time at a Christmas party at Larchton Manor, the pretty country residence of Katy's uncle, Squire Fielding, and the following Christmas found them both there again with many others, for the Sorrels were a large family, and it was seldom that one or the other was not absent from the home circle.

The early twilight of a bitterly cold Winter day was closing in fast, and Katy, seated on a low ottoman in the morning room, was working busily at a Christmas wreath while Ellis stood, leaning against the chimney-piece, intently watching her.

"Now, is it not provoking?" she exclaimed, after a long silence; "I shall not have half enough holly to finish this wreath, and it must be done to-night."

"Cannot you lengthen it out with something else?" asked her companion. "Here is all this mistletoe, for example,—what a pretty contrast it would make to the scarlet berries!" and he took up a branch as he spoke and playfully held it high above her head.

"Don't, Ellis!" she cried, pettishly drawing back. "I tell you I cannot possibly do without some more holly. Besides, Captain Hawkins says——"

"What does Captain Hawkins say?" inquired Ellis with sudden gravity, as Katy made a pause.

She looked up quickly when she heard the altered tone, and flushed high, more with impatience than confusion, as she answered, with a ring of defiance in her voice: "Captain Hawkins says that a complexion like mine looks best with a head dress of scarlet berries; and what could be prettier than this lovely holly, so bright and glowing? Oh for the days of old romance, when a lady had only to hint a wish and her chosen knight would fly to the ends of the earth to gratify it!"

"You shall not reproach me with inattention to your wishes, Katy," replied Ellis coldly; "I will get you the holly," and in a few moments she heard the hall door close, and the quick firm tramp of her lover's footsteps as he passed rapidly down the gravelled drive.

"Now he's jealous, poor fellow," she thought, as she held her handiwork aloft to judge of the effect; "and if he's jealous as a lover what will he be as a husband?"

Slowly rising from her seat she laid the unfinished wreath aside and left the room. In crossing the hall she encountered Captain Hawkins, who had just come in and was shaking the snow from his overcoat.

"I hope you are prepared for close imprisonment, Miss Sorrel" he remarked; "we shall be snowed-up to a certainty. I could barely see my way across from the stables. What do you say to a few charades, or something of that sort? We could easily get them up, you know, so as to be ready for a blockade."

But Katy was in no humor for charades, and declared it must be time to dress for dinner.

"Oh, I forgot," said the Captain; "we dine early to-day, don't we?"

"Yes; because my uncle always likes a dance on Christmas Eve, and we all join in it—even the servants," replied Katy.

"And may I hope for the honor of your hand in the first dance?" inquired the Captain.

And Katy agreed.

In the meantime, Ellis Wilmore was striding angrily along in the direction of the far dingle. His reflections was far from pleasing.

"Ah," he thought, "it is to please Captain Hawkins that I am sent out on such a night and such an errand. And she will smile in my face and thank me, and in her heart laugh at my slavish folly."

He ground his teeth, and drew his hat fiercely over his brow; for the storm had now set in severely, and the blinding, driving snow so confused and bewildered him, that, after struggling on for a full hour, he found that he had fairly lost his way. After a time however, he heard bells, and found himself approaching a house apparently of large dimensions. Here he determined to seek shelter for a time, and, if need be, a guide to enable him to retrace his steps to Larchton Manor. His loud summons at the door-bell was promptly answered, and he was ushered into a comfortable sitting-room, brilliant with lamplight and the blaze of fire.

There were only three persons present—one a gentleman of perhaps sixty years or more, and two ladies; the elder one evidently his wife, the other a young girl of about eighteen. Wilmore soon explained his dilemma, and found, to his dismay, that he was at least six miles from home and would have to remain all night.

"After all, perhaps it is for the best," he reflected; "and Katy will easily console herself for my absence, though perhaps not for the loss of the wreath."

The evening passed away pleasantly enough—at Oakley Cottage—for that was the name of the house—though without any symptom of the festivity usual at such a time. Not even was there a sprig of evergreen in the room, and Ellis fancied as the night wore on that his hostess looked sad and preoccupied, and that her husband noticed it, and tried to arouse her attention by entering into an animated discussion with his guest. At length he turned to the young lady, and addressing her as "Edith" requested her to give them a little music. She complied at once, without any of the affectations generally considered necessary on occasions, and, seating herself at a splendid grand piano, sang a plaintive melody.

Early the next morning Wilmore descended to the breakfast-room, and found Edith, attired in a simple morning costume, busily employed in preparing the morning meal. She gave him a cordial greeting, and apologized for the absence of her aunt, who, she said, never came down so early; her uncle was already out somewhere in the grounds.

"Your aunt seems in rather delicate health," said Wilmore, "or perhaps the entry of a stranger so unexpectedly was too much for her."

"Oh no," answered Edith, "it is not that; she is always as you saw her last night. Of course you do not know how sad an anniversary it was to them both. Ten years ago their only son, a fine promising youth of about fifteen, was killed on Christmas Eve as he was returning from a ramble over the hills. A sudden storm came on like that of last night; he lost his way, and in the morning was found dead among the snowdrifts. It was very long before they recovered from the shock, and my poor aunt has never been quite the same since."

"Most likely," said Wilmore, rather bitterly. "I should have shared the same fate but for the friendly light in one of these windows."

"Oh, did you see that?" exclaimed Edith. "A light has been placed in that window every winter night since poor Edward's death. It is lighted on Christmas Eve as soon as the chimes ring out from Stapelton church."

There was a great wonder and some uneasiness at Larchton Manor, when the night wore on and brought no Ellis Wilmore. Katy was more troubled than she chose to confess; still there was yet no great anxiety. About noon the next day the door opened quietly, and a tall figure, coated and muffled to the chin, entered the drawing room. Katy who was there with Captain Hawkins half rose with a sudden exclamation.

"Just as I said," remarked the Captain coolly; "Miss Sorrel was expressing fears for your safety, Wilmore; but I told her you would turn up again."

"Pray don't trouble yourself to explain my feelings, Captain Hawkins," Kate said sharply; "I assure you there is not the least occasion."

"So I see," remarked Ellis drily. "I must apologise for executing your commission so tardily, Miss Sorrel; but the truth is, I lost my way and missed the holly. This morning, however, I have been more fortunate, and you will find the result of my labors on your dressing-table, I believe."

Wilmore's return becoming known, he was speedily surrounded by a group of clamorous speakers, all eager for a full account of his night's adventures.

"Did you shelter in a cave?" asked one.

"Or in a gipsy's tent?" said another.

"Or were you wafted away to fairyland?" laughed a third.

But Wilmore good humoredly parried all their thrusts, declaring that he had passed the night in an enchanted castle, and was still under the spell—which perhaps was nearer the truth than he himself suspected.

When Katy went up to dress she found a magnificent bouquet on her table, and a great branch of holly, thickly clustered with brilliant scarlet berries. In the delight of her heart she flew downstairs, determined to make it up with her generous lover. She found him alone in the billiard-room, sitting thoughtfully beside the flickering firelight. He received her thanks with a warm caress, exclaiming as he fondly smoothed her glossy tresses: "Oh, Katy, if you would only be always like this!"

But the spirit of flirtation was still strong upon Kate. Before the evening was over she had learned the whole history of Oakley Cottage and its inmates; and having arrived at the conclusion that Wilmore had, wilfully or not, swerved from the path of strict allegiance to herself, she determined to be revenged by keeping up a decided flirtation with Captain Hawkins, who was quite ready to second her. For this purpose she decked herself out in his favorite colors, and treated the unfortunate bouquet with all the careless indifference she so well knew how to assume. Wilmore took no notice, and, piqued at his seeming calmness, she went so far as to detach a sprig of blossoming myrtle, which she allowed Captain Hawkins to place in his button-hole.

One glance at Ellis Wilmore as she did so told her that at last she had gone too far.

* * * * *

It is Christmas Eve again—wild, bleak and snowy. Round a great glowing fire in a handsome, spacious room a family group is gathered. It consists of a fine-looking couple, no longer young, three fair young girls, and a stalwart military-looking youth. They are clustered round the piano, at which one of them presides, and they are practising a Christmas Carol.

"Once more, girls," said the youth, "and then we shall be about perfect; particularly with a little of your help, mother dear. Now do—only just this once—it is Christmas Eve, you know," and with gentle force he half lifted her from her chair, and drew her towards the piano.

"Do sing, Edie dearest," said her husband; "you know how I love to hear your voice."

Thus persuaded, the lovely mother joined her yet sweet and powerful tones to those of her children.

"Do you remember, Ellis, the first time I ever sang to you? And hark—the Christmas chimes! I could almost fancy the past was all a dream, and that we were again by the fireside at Oakley Cottage. Do you remember that night?" whispered the wife, as she again seated herself beside her husband.

The answer was a loving look and a fond pressure of the hand. Soon the clock struck twelve; and surrounded by a joyous chorus of congratulations and good wishes, the Christmas morning broke upon those happy parents.

There is another fireside, miles and miles away, and its light falls upon a very different scene. A woman, sad and solitary, scarcely yet past middle life, though her brow shows signs of care, and her cheek is pale and faded, sits beside the fire in a small dingy room, gazing absently at the glowing embers. There are no fond Christmas greetings whispered in her ear; no tender kisses pressed upon her lips—there is only the bitter recollection of what might have been but for her folly. Suddenly, as the night wears slowly away, there come upon the wailing wind, now loud, now faint, the far-off chime of Christmas Bells. She hears it with a quivering lip and sinking heart, for the memory of the past comes back as fresh as ever; and in her troubled sleep that night she weaves again the Christmas wreath, and in fancy hears once more those still unforgotten tones, repeating in mournful accents, "Too late! too late!"

An Irish correspondent of a Dublin paper writes: "The arrival is expected in England of 10 000 turkeys from the United States. Ireland has always been a great source of supply to the London Christmas market, and the foreign competition will heavily affect the prices in the home trade. I have seen fifty shillings paid for a big turkey in Leadenhall market, and normal charges are certainly exorbitant. If the American fowl come over here in good condition, it will be a sad blow to the hopes of the poultry producers in Ireland."

The "Waste Not" Society is composed of Sunday school children at Brighton, Eng. Its members saved in twelve months about $125 worth of refuse paper, and sold it for the benefit of two little girls, who were thus supported at the Orphanage.

Scientific and Useful.

WATER-PROOF PAINT.—A good water-proof paint is made by dissolving five parts of gelatine in hot water, and adding one part of chromate of lime; the cement must be kept in vessels which are well shielded from light.

TURPENTINE VARNISH.—Turpentine varnish may be compounded as follows: Mastic in tears, 12 oz.; pounded glass, 5 oz.; camphor, ¾ oz.; oil of turpentine, one quart; digest with agitation until dissolved; then add Venice turpentine (previously liquefied by a gentle heat), one and one-half ounce. Mix well, and decant it from the wood the next day.

SAWDUST IN MORTAR.—Some time since the use of sawdust in mortar was recommended as superior even to hair for the prevention of cracking and subsequent peeling off of rough casing under the action of storms and frost. The mortar is made by mixing one part of cement, two of lime, two of sawdust, and five of sharp sand, the sawdust being first well mixed with the cement and sand.

FOR CONSUMPTIVES.—According to the investigations of a Russian professor, singing is an excellent means of preventing consumption, and for the development and strengthening of the chest it is more efficient than even gymnastic exercises. The professor has examined 220 singers, varying in age from nine to fifty-three years, and found that the chest is greater and stronger among them than among persons of any other occupation.

USEFUL HINTS.—Paint splashed upon window glass can be easily removed by a strong solution of soda. A flannel cloth dipped in warm soap suds, then into whiting, and applied to paint, will instantly remove all grease. To take ink spots out of linen—Dip the ink-spot in pure melted tallow, then wash out the tallow, and the ink will come out with it. This is said to be unfailing. To remove rust from a stovepipe—Rub with linseed oil (a little goes a good ways); build a slow fire until it dries. Oil in the spring to prevent it from rusting. To give stoves a good polish—Rub them with a piece of Brussels carpet after blackening them.

A HOME MADE FLOORCLOTH.—Have any of you a spare bedchamber, seldom used, the floor of which you would like to cover at little expense? Go to the paperhanger's store and select a paper looking as much like a carpet as you can find. Having taken it home, first paper the floor of your bedroom with brown paper or newspapers. Then, over these, put down your wall-paper. A good way to do this will be to put a good coat of paste, the width of the roll of paper, and the length of the room, and then lay it down, unrolling and smoothing at the same time. When the floor is all covered, then size and varnish; only glue and common dark varnish need be used, and the floor will look all the better for the darkening these will give it. When it is dry, put down a few rugs by the bedside and before the toilet-table, and you have as pretty a floorcloth as you could wish—a floorcloth, too, that will last for years, if not exposed to constant wear, and at a trifling expense.

Farm and Garden.

ROLLING MEADOWS.—Rolling the meadows will level the surface by reducing the hummocks, sinking stones, sticks and roots, compact the soil about the roots, and so strengthen the grass. A light dressing, 100 pounds nitrate of soda per acre, for instance, will encourage the growth and add largely to the yield.

WINDOW PLANTS.—Water widow plants every morning, using water warm enough not to chill. On a cold day, when there is danger of freezing, do not water unless the leaves begin to droop. Keep all dying leaves and blossoms cut off. Occasionally stir the surface of the earth around the root so as to admit air and moisture. If troubled by plant lice, sprinkle with solution of white hellebore.

CORN SEPARATOR.—Among recent agricultural inventions is a corn screen of separator, which effects its object by means of a series of cells, instead of passing the different kinds of grain or seeds between wires, or through perforations. The action is rather slow, but the machine perfectly separates long from round corn; wheat from barley or oats, from peas, vetches, and smut, and divides wheat into two qualities.

HARROWING WHEAT.—Harrowing wheat in the spring will increase the yield at least five bushels to the acre; it won't hurt the timothy, and the clover seed can be sown after the harrowing is done. It is an easy matter for any farmer to prove the truth or falsity of such a statement. Try it on one acre this spring if you do not want to risk the whole field, and watch the result. It is only by experimenting that the farmer advances.

SLAUGHTERING FOWLS FOR MARKET.—Death by strangulation always presents a bad appearance, because the blood is instantaneously arrested, and, having no outlet to flow off in, it coagulates in the veins, presenting a swollen, dark appearance. This may take place to some considerable extent, when death is produced in any sudden manner; therefore, the best way to kill fowls for market is to cut off the main arteries by putting a small knife blade into the mouth or upper portion of the throat, and thus bleed them freely, holding them quietly until the struggles cease.

POULTRY IN FRANCE. A curious calculation has been made and published in a French paper in regard to hens. It reckons the number of hens in France at 40 000 000, valued at $20 000 000. Of these about one-fifth are killed annually for the market. There is an annual production of 80,000 000 chickens, which in market yield $20 000,000. The extra value to be added for capons, fattened hens and the like is put at $8 220 000. The production of eggs is reckoned at 100 to each hen, which are worth $48 000 000. In all, it is reckoned that the value of hens, chickens and eggs sold in the market of France amounts to $80,000 000.

TIGHTENING WAGON TIRES.—Procure a small piece of leather, from an inch and a half to two inches in diameter, make round holes in the centres of these pieces, and make a straight cut from the holes to the outer edges of the pieces, so as to form open rings. The holes must be made of a size that will nicely fit the tenons on the outer end of the spokes. Place a fulcrum on the top of a hub, on which place your lever, with the short end under the felloe, near a spoke; have an assistant bear down on the other end sufficiently to raise the felloe, and expose the shoulder and tenon of the spoke; open your leather and fit it nicely around the tenon, holding it to its place while your assistant relaxes the lever, and settles the felloe firmly upon the lever by a blow or two upon the tire.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
720 Sansom St., Phila.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 27, 1879

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THE NEW YEAR.

THE arrival of another New Year is a milestone on the road of life that may well serve to remind us of the course gone over, and make us thoughtful of what is to come.

Although it is fit at all times that we should strive and work for the best, we are so much the creatures of habit, that resolutions made or actions performed from some established rule or starting place, are always strongest. It may not do our judgment or strength of purpose much credit that it is so, but we seem to fear that a new determination to do better, to begin life with nobler impulses, to change from a former line of action,—will lack spirit and force unless commenced at some particular season or under some peculiar circumstances. It would appear to be a relic of an old time superstition concerning the sanctity of omens, that influences us almost against our will.

Christmas and New Year, therefore, have been regarded as the most fitting seasons for this reorganization of habits and purposes—this reconsecration of heart and hand for the work of life. Then, beyond, all other times, the soul is brought in contact with grander feelings and more humane sympathies. The spirits of love and charity—predominant in everything we see and hear—in voice, face and eye, as well as the thousand and one inanimate objects that speak the glorious language of the season, awake in the soul impulses of good, that only need the firm hand of resolution to make them blessed guides and guardians for all the future.

And if the heart justly profits by the lessons it may now learn, or obeys its fresh-found guides, its daily beatings may be marked by deeds that will last forever. The period that custom has set apart for the holiday may pass, and its sweet influences leave many as cold and strange to their own and the great world's needs as it found them. But those who with the new year start forth on a new road of duty, conning the truths the time has taught them, will always recognize it at its true worth. They will see the necessity of crowding perhaps no less indulgence, no less kindness, no less charity and love, in this one small corner of the year, but the need of spreading some throughout the rest. They will see that even the most fortunate need all the kindness and good they can receive in this world, and that it would almost seem more like a fashionable folly than a noble trait of character to bestow affection and charity there, where, the holidays gone, indifference, selfishness and all uncharitableness come again to dwell for a twelvemonth.

But let us hope that the present New Year may bring with it the best impulses to all, and fortune to carry them out, for it is only thus that the season will have brought its full reward.

Let your thoughts be fit and suitable for the subject. Every day have higher thoughts of God, lower thoughts of self, kinder thoughts of your brethren, and more hopeful thoughts of all around you.

SANCTUM CHAT.

A process for manufacturing paper from grass has been patented, which produces more durable, smoother and finer paper than can be made from straw, rags or wood, and better adapted for writing and drawing. One pound of dried grass gives from a quarter to a half pound of the best paper. For the manufacture of grass paper but little change will be required in the present paper mills. The grass is first washed and macerated in order to lay bare the fibre, and is then boiled with lime and chemicals to a pulp, bleached and prepared as other paper pulp.

—

The rapidity with which the bison is disappearing from the Western plains may be inferred from the following statistics collected at Fort Macleod, and Fort Walsh, both places being important centres for the collection of buffalo robes. The money value on each robe to the Indian hunter is roughly estimated at $2. In 1877 some thirty thousand robes were gathered at Fort Macleod, and a larger number at Fort Walsh. In 1878 the number was 12,797 at the former, and 16,897 at the latter place; while this year only 5 764 have come in at Fort Macleod, and 8,277 at Fort Walsh.

—

"The scarcity of money is keenly felt at Constantinople," says the correspondent of a London paper. "It is said that sometimes there is not a single para to be found in the palace, and yet Osman Pasha has discovered how to obtain his 42,000 francs per month. He places a stout sergeant before the entrance to the Finance Minister's room, with orders to confiscate every sum arriving until the amount he requires is made up. The grossest corruption prevails in every department of State. The Inspectors of Finance are expelled by the respective Pashas in whose favor depredations are carried on."

—

Cases of trichinosis have become so frequent in Berlin that the authorities have taken the most stringent measures with regard to the inspection of pork. It is required that "whoever kills a pig, or causes it to be killed, with the intention of selling either the meat or preparations of it, must have the slaughtered animal examined by an inspector of meat, who, with the aid of a microscope, shall satisfy himself as to the presence or absence of trichina. And the meat cannot be cut up without the certificate of an inspector, and after his stamp has been placed on the slaughtered animal." Contravention of this order is punished with a fine or imprisonment.

—

In a French paper it is boldly predicted that before many years the Chinese question will become as urgent in Europe as it is now in America. The isolation of China is a thing of the past, and in a century, if not sooner, we are told, the Chinese will become the principal workman element not only in America, but in Europe. In fifty years steam navigation will transport the Chinese at fabulously low prices to all parts of the world. We shall see arise in the cities of Europe Chinese quarters which will cause discontent among our working classes, with whom they will have seriously to reckon, and the Chinese element will end by fixing itself among us like the Jews.

—

The report sent home by the captain of the British naval vessel Opal, describing his recent visit to the descendants of the Bounty mutineers on Pitcairn's Island, states that the islanders still retain "the simple piety and moral excellence, guilelessness, and affectionate hospitality" by which they have been hitherto characterized. Since September, 1878, when the island was visited by the Admiral on the Pacific station, little change, we are told, has taken place in the small community. Three children have been born since that time, and the number of inhabitants is now ninety-three. The coming of strangers to take up their abode among them is disliked by the islanders, but they appear doubtful of their power to prevent it.

—

It will be with a large amount of satisfaction that persons interested in epistolary lore will learn that the letters of Peter the Great are at length to be given to the public. For many years past the correspondence of the greatest of Russia's heroes has been lying uninvestigated in a room in the St. Petersburg Public Library. To edit the letters, which number 8,600, a special commission has been appointed by the Emperor, and it is expected that the work will fill nearly fifteen volumes. It would be interesting to know if Mr. Schuyler, who is said to be writing a biography of Peter the Great, has referred to any of these letters; otherwise, he might fail to render adequate justice to some points in his hero's character."

—

A letter from Prof. Nordenskjold, written from Yokohoma the day after his arrival, to a friend in Gotha, described the harbor where the Vega spent last winter, on the Asiatic side of Behring's Strait, and is chiefly interesting for its account of two tribes of natives who encamped in the vicinity and made daily visits to the ship. These people, called Tschuktschs, had no knowledge of money, but their honesty was such that not an article was missed from the vessel, although they were allowed to range over it at will. They were great beggars, however, and very sharp at a trade. On one occasion they cut off the head, tail and feet of a fox and tried to sell it as a hare. Not one of them had ever heard of the Christian religion, nor of the Czar of Russia, in whose dominions they lived.

—

In addition to the great national festival by which it is intended next year to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Belgium, it is designed to erect a monumental building as a permanent commemoration of the event. It is recommended that an edifice should be built in the Greek style of architecture on the Kockel Hill, the highest point of Brussels. The reliefs, sculptures, paintings, and other ornamentation are to represent the chief incidents and personages concerned in the events of 1830, and of the first fifty years of the history of the kingdom. The cost of the building is estimated at three million francs, the ornamentation alone being set down at one million francs. At the festival itself, among other things, a series of operas by Belgian composers is to be performed at the expense of the State.

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The Danes are beginning to manifest uneasiness as to the fate which awaits their country. They anticipate being sliced up at no distant date for the immediate benefit of Prussia and Sweden. As Denmark can no longer defend the communications between Jutland and the islands by the superiority of her fleet, as was the case during the former wars with Germany, the population of Copenhagen are said to be profoundly impressed with the conviction that, at the first opportunity, Prussia intends to occupy Denmark, keeping as her share of the spoil the peninsula of Jutland and the island of Fuhnen, while Sealand and the surrounding islands are to revert to Sweden. This would be tantamount to the final division of Denmark, begun in 1815 by uniting Norway to Sweden, and followed up in 1864 by the occupation of the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg by Prussia.

—

A German physician, who has given much attention to the subject, has come to the conclusion that the only way to preserve peace among the women of a household when they are kept within doors, is to oblige them to keep absolute silence. When they are much thrown together, their tongues, he says, should remain in a state of perfect quiescence. They may converse with each other, if necessary, by means of signs and symbols, but should on no account utter a word. He has found by experience that this regimen, when strictly adhered to, produces the happiest results. In one or two cases he has actually known feelings of mutual regard and esteem to arise between women who could not open their mouths previously without disagreeable consequences. Their appetites also improved in so marked a degree that they could go on eating luncheon till tea-time.

—

An eccentric Englishman has lately built a house in the Quarter Tivoli, for the residence of himself, his wife, and eight children, which is the talk of all Paris. It is circular, and has neither door nor window externally. The approach to it is from the ground floor on to the roof by a ladder, which is moved up and down by machinery similar to that of a drawbridge. There is only one floor, and that contains eighteen apartments, more or less small, looking into the centre, which is lighted from above by a glazed cupola. One stove for all these rooms is in the middle, and in summer its place is to be occupied by an exquisite parterre of flowers. A circular balcony, open to all the apartments, surrounds this place. The motive of this oddity is, of course, only known to the author of it; but everybody can see that two points are gained by it—immunity from taxes on doors and windows, and a perfect preventive of any attempt at burglary.

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One of the most striking impressions of Genoa is the profusion of statuary and carving which meets you everywhere. Most of the old palaces have fine work on the front, and it becomes more elaborate and imposing inside, where magnificent halls and massive stairways, whose entrance is very frequently a pair of colossal, crouching lions, lead you from room to room, and floor to floor. In the streets the very walls of the common houses, particularly at the corners and over the doorways, at odd angles and curious niches over little shops you find the images of an innumerable army of saints, the effigies often set up in the fashion of a little altar. Through the hotels, banks and public buildings of every kind are the statues of great men, modern and old. All these, besides the churches, parks, cemeteries and public gardens are crowded with rare and costly works. It is this wealth of marble, pure and white, and shaped with exquisite art, that has justly won for this city the well-merited title of "Genoa the Beautiful."

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Although London is nominally a Christian city, a great portion of its population sit in heathen darkness. Especially in the eastern part of the city the provisions for worship are exceedingly meagre. In Bow and Stratford, and in the neighborhood of the East India docks there are new settlements of many hundred houses which are entirely without churches. The London Congregational Union has been considering the evangelization of the city. It proposes that on certain Sundays in each month the regular attendants at the churches give up their places to the poor folks, and that free lectures and sermons be delivered to those people who have no church home. The suggestion is also made that the daily newspapers of London be requested to diffuse religious information and instruction. All this is good as far as it goes, but it promises little religious aid to the uneducated people who are not likely to go to the churches. These people do not generaly read the papers, and if the London press were to exclude all other matter for the sake of filling its pages with religious truth, there is small probability that the very persons who most need to be made better would ever hear anything at all about it.

—

Of all features of English country life, country balls are perhaps the most incomprehensible to a foreigner. He cannot understand why so much fuss should be made about them; why, if they are worth having at all, there should at most country towns be only one ball every year; why people are willing to drive five or ten miles to them on a cold winter's night; or why they never take place on Sundays. In many districts the ball is the one event of the year, surpassing in interest even the Confirmation and the Agricultural Show. There are large country houses which are never filled except for the single annual dissipation. It is a greater landmark in the year than either Christmas or Easter, and it affords more occasion of conversation than the session, the war, or the literature of the day. Six weeks beforehand hostesses begin to plan their campaigns and carefully consider whom it is most to their interest to invite. First they try the peerage, and, failing the peerage, the baronetage; failing the baronetage, the landed gentry, the richest available nobodies. Eldest sons, younger sons in rich families, younger sons of noblemen, baronets, etc., are all carefully weighed and sorted, and the list is gone wearily through until as desirable a household is secured as circumstances will permit. Some hosts generally make a struggle to prevent the ball from being held at all. They point out that certain houses are shut up, and that some person who was much respected in the neighborhood has lately died; in short, they endeavor by every conceivable means to prevent the ball, but generally without success.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

BY ALICE L. MCALILLY.

How wisely has the Power Divine
Arranged His mighty plan,
And gives such sunshine, cloud, and clime,
As best for good of man.

That friend, compassionate and near,
Tho' all the world has fled—
His tender mercy dries the tear
Which mourneth o'er the dead.

Though chast'ning with the power to bless,
Commanding love and fear,
He grieves with pitying tenderness
To see the sufferer's tear.

He lets the heart's torn fragments bleed
Until no sting remains;
And when we come, in helpless need,
He soothes to peace our pains.

Upholding when the flesh is weak,
And human strength is frail,
He guardeth our defenceless sleep
With love that does not fail.

Then what are we O creatures small,
That we are wailing still?
It will not lift the funeral pall,
To weep 'gainst Heaven's will.

Deceived.

BY PERCY VERE.

CHAPTER I.

PERCIVAL ROYAL leant back on the soft velvet cushions of his luxurious couch with an uneasy expression on his handsome face.

With an impatient hand he pushed away the scented cigar he had been smoking, and ran his jeweled fingers through the soft brown curls on his white forehead.

He was a singularly handsome young man, with large, dreamy blue eyes, and fair, clear skin. A long, silky tawny moustache ornamented his upper lip, and the rest of his face was as fair as a woman's.

He was tall and finely made, with a splendid length and strength of limb.

He was dressed in the most elegant, most expensive style.

The room was a grand old room, broad and low, with painted panels in strange devices, carved ceiling and oaken furniture; its polished floor was carpeted with softest velvet; its narrow, diamond shaped window panes were draped with satin damask.

In the broad, old-fashioned grate blazed a huge log, that sent a soft, glowing light dancing on the walls.

It was growing dusk, and cold and cheerless enough outside. Percival turned his eyes away from the bright flames, and looked out at the gray wintry sky; a few flakes of feathery white snow were still falling on the white shrouded earth.

Percival sighed, and once more passed his fingers through his hair.

"It's awkward; good Heaven, it is awkward," he said. "What must be, must be"

Percival's life had been a gay one; all the most expensive pleasures had been his; he had been going at a headlong, reckless speed, and now suddenly he had been pulled up with complete ruin staring him in the face.

Now the urgent need of ready money was so great that he only saw one way out of the difficulty, and that way perhaps the most unpleasant for a man of his character.

He must go and beg for help from his father, the stern, gray-headed man who bore no great love for his eldest son; but Percival knew no other way, and he inwardly vowed he would redeem his life, when once he had out the way out of the mass of debts that hedged him in, and for the sake of a deep and tender love in his heart, and the thought of a woman's face, he forced down his pride and accepted the only means before him of being able to face the world a free man.

He walked slowly up and down the long room, then opened the door, and went out into the broad hall.

Sounds of music and laughter reached his ear; warmth and brightness filled the house, and he went down the grand old staircase and joined a bright, lively group standing below.

Not a sign of sadness remained on his face, and his laugh was as gay and as light as the rest.

He stood for a moment with them, and then passed on.

The glass-doors of the conservatory stood open.

Percival paused and looked within.

A flush of pleasure tinged his cheeks and brought a bright light into his eyes.

Amongst the cool green leaves, sitting in a very pyramid of blossoms, her beautiful head leant back, so that her perfect face was turned towards him, was the woman whom Percival loved.

She looked up and a smile parted her full red lips.

"Why do you stand there looking at me, Percival," she said, "and not saying a word?"

"You are so beautiful," he answered, almost in a whisper, drawing nearer. "You are superbly lovely."

She only turned her head away, while a slight tinge of color flashed her cheek.

"Lillian," he said, after a moment's pause "I wish you were not as difficult to understand as other women."

"What would you know of me?" she questioned, her face still turned partly from him.

"If you love me," he answered, in a strange deep tone that trembled with emotion.

She was silent.

Percival hardly expected any answer, for how had he dared to ask her love, a jewel so priceless and so fair, and a love he knew he had no right to accept, even if she gave it him?

What had his life been that he could offer himself to her? Was it enough to say his future would be brighter? Would that efface the black past, with its vices and sins? And yet he could not deny himself the exquisite delight of hearing her confess her love, and a longing, almost greater than he could withstand, came over him to put his arms about her lovely form and draw her to his bosom.

"Do you remember this is Christmas Eve?" he asked.

"I was just thinking so," she answered, "and thinking, too, that you were strangely gloomy for such a night"

"One word from you would drive the gloom away," he answered. "Lillian, do you love me?"

"Yes," she said, "I love you," and put her warm, soft hand in his, which he raised to his lips.

"Come and look at the snow," he said, suddenly.

He drew her to the window and they stood silently looking out upon the vast white sheet of snow.

Percival looked down at the head bowed upon his shoulder, with its wealth of bright brown hair.

What if his father should refuse him the help he needed? What if, after these few moments of pleasure, he should be compelled to relinquish the love he had gained? were the thoughts that rose in his mind.

What if she should live to hate his name when she heard of his disgrace?

"Darling, darling," he murmured, "say that you love me again; let me hear you say it, Lillian, my own."

He held her closer in his arms, bent his face down, and kissed her lips

Then he suddenly put her from him, and went back to the room he had left, threw himself down on a couch, and buried his face in his hands.

He could not bear the thought that his past folly might separate him from the woman he loved forever.

And yet he knew that if his father refused to aid him he must leave the country to flee from disgrace.

"Percival"

A voice close by his side startled him; he raised his head quickly.

"What is it?" he asked.

A young man, almost the picture of himself was standing before him.

Only there was a wonderful difference in the selfish eyes, and weak, irresolute mouth.

He was Percival's brother, younger by some ten years.

"What is it, Bertie?" Percival asked again.

"I'm in a fix, Percy," answered the young man, looking on the ground and fidgeting uneasily.

Percy laughed good-humoredly.

"You want some more money, I suppose," he said. "Look here, Bertie, you'll find yourself in a fix and no joke about it, some day, if you go on playing this game. I know I'm not precisely the kind of fellow to give advice, but upon my soul you'd better take it."

Percival grew serious as he spoke.

"Give up this fool's-play, and try to redeem the name your brother has dishonored," he added.

Bertie winced

"Yes, Bertie," he continded, "I've dishonored our name, for I'm a ruined man. All the world may know it soon, so you may as well hear it now."

A frightened look came into Bertie's face as he watched his brother draw two hundred dollars in notes from his pocket and put them on the table with his diamond pin, studs, and cuff links, which he took off one by one, and pushed towards his brother.

"There, that's all I've got left; they'll be more use to you than to me—take them."

"All you've got, Percy!"—and Bertie passed a quivering hand over his brow, cold and damp.

"You don't mean to say you're deeper in debt than that do you?" questioned Percival. "Why, let's see, there would be——"

"Stop!" cried Bertie, "three times that would not save me. Oh, Percy! can't you help me?"

"Look here," said Percival, "I'll tell you what you'd better do."

"What?" he asked eagerly.

"Just go to the governor and tell him how you stand; it's what I've made up my mind to do. I stand a bad chance, but you are his favorite; he won't refuse you to any amount."

"I can't—I can't!" gasped Bertie. "It's to keep the governor from knowing about it that I came to you."

"So bad as that!" asked Percy. "Make a clean breast of it, boy. What have you done?"

Bertie's eyes dropped before his brother's steady gaze.

"I couldn't help it, Percy, I couldn't. The men were at me for the money—the governor said he would give me no more, and I didn't know what else to do, and I—I saw the governor's check-book, and——"

Bertie paused.

"Forged your father's signature!" filled in Percy, in a hard, stern voice, and Bertie's head bowed lower in silence

For a few moments a hard struggle went on within him; then turning away his face, he said—

"Bertie, I'll get you out of this."

"How, Percy, how?" he asked.

"Never mind how; all you have got to do is to hold your tongue whatever you hear said," was the reply.

"Percy, no; I can't let you," cried Bertie, in a frightened voice; "you mean to take it on yourself."

'Hold your tongue, boy!" cried Percival. "I can see plainly how things will be. What you have done will be imputed to me, and even did I wish to turn it upon you I should not be believed; our father hates me. Now go and leave me to think."

Bertie began to pour forth his thanks.

"Hush!" cried Percy. "Now go!"

And, as his brother left the room, he looked after him with a pitiful gaze.

Percy soon after made his way to his father's room.

He listened at the door before he knocked, and heard someone pacing to and fro.

Then he opened the door, and stood before a grand-looking old man, with snow-white hair.

"How dare you venture into my presence, sir?" said the old man.

"I wish to speak to you," answered Percy, sinking into a chair.

"Get up!" and the fiery flush flew up to the very roots of the grey hair on the old man's forehead. "Get up and look at these!"

He pointed with a trembling finger to some scattered papers on the table.

Percy glanced towards them; there lay the forged checks.

A little pink note, that lay amongst them, caught his attention, and he took it in his hand and read it.

"Your cruel son has deserted me," ran the note. "I am a wretched, deceived girl! I trusted him, and he has left me to misery. Will you do something for me?"

Percy laid the note down and bit his lip in bitter shame for Bertie.

"These, and this," said Percival, pointing to the note, "are not my work; believe me, if you like, or not; but, before Heaven, I swear I did not do it!"

The old man stood in silent rage for some moments, unable to speak; then he hissed the words between his lips.

"Not yours, you false, mean-hearted, base scoundrel! Heaven! to think that I should have cherished such a viper, and called him son!"

Percy heard in silence, his eyes still fixed on his father's face.

"I could have forgiven you, Percy—I could have forgiven you whatever might have been your debts, and would have paid them all if you had come and asked; but this,"—and he touched with his fingers the little pink note—"I never can forgive. It is a stain, a blot upon my untarnished name—*my* name, unsullied by anyone but you! Would to Heaven I could take it from you! but that you must carry with you through all the rest of your vile life; but what I can take from you I will. You are disinherited, sir, disinherited—not a dollar of my money shall you have—Bertie shall be my heir!"

The color deepened on Percy's face.

"Get out of my sight—out of this house. I will give you one hour's start, and then Justice shall be on your track. I will not spare you, though you are my son. Begone! One hour from this moment the officers of justice pursue you!"

"It is Christmas Eve, sir," faltered Percy; he hardly knew why he said it.

"Christmas Eve! and the best time to rid one's house of a villain. Begone!"

Percy bowed his head, and silently left the room.

One hour was all the time he had, and yet he would use some of those precious moments in once more looking upon the face he loved.

He would not speak to her; he would only take one lingering loving look

He went again towards the conservatory where he had left her, hoping that she still would be there that he might gaze upon her fair face for the last time.

As he drew near the door he heard voices, and leant forward eagerly, for he recognized the tones.

His beautiful Lillian sat where he had left her; but she was leaning forward with clasped hands, an ashy pallor on her face, her lips pale and trembling, and by her side sat Bertie—Bertie! the cause of all his suffering.

The youth was gazing intently into her face.

A deadly faintness came over Percy, as he caught the words that fell from the boy's lips.

"Will you come, Lillian, will you come?" Bertie said, with painful eagerness in his voice.

Lillian clasped her hands, and made an effort to answer; but her head sank lower on her breast, and she remained silent.

"Lillian, dear," continued Bertie, "think what an awful thing—think what a disgrace! Will you not come with me? Come, this very night!"

With a bitterness that was well-nigh despair, Percy saw Lillian raise her beautiful head, and, looking straight into Bertie's face, she laid her hand on his arm, and said, in clear, distinct tones—

"Bertie, I will come."

"Oh, Heaven! anything but this!" muttered Percy, as he pressed his hand to his heated brow; "I could bear anything but this!"

His first impulse was to strike his brother to the ground.

But he conquered himself as he saw Lillian still gazing up into Bertie's eyes.

"Let them be happy," he murmured, "while I am a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth."

And then he turned away.

He waited for nothing except to throw a thick coat about him, and put in his pocket a flask of brandy.

Then he opened the street-door and looked out.

"Going out, sir?" said the voice of his own servant behind him.

Percy made no answer.

"Beg pardon sir, but have you forgotten it's Christmas Eve, and the house is full of company, sir?',

'No, I've not forgotten," answered Percy, "but I have urgent business, and I must go."

He moved his hand as if he wished to be left alone, and his servant turned away, slowly murmuring—

"What wild freak is he up to now?"

Disinherited, disowned by his father, suffering for his brother's sins, bitterly deceived in the woman he loved, slowly and sorrowfully he left the house, and went out into the cold night alone—out into the heartless world.

Slowly at first he walked, and then he remembered it was some time since he left his father; perhaps his pursuers were even now leaving the very doors which had just closed against him, and he quickened his pace.

He turned and looked back at the grand old house, standing dimly against the dark sky, and as he looked along the snow covered track, with his own lonely foot marks, he saw two dark figures advancing.

His heart beat quickly, and the warm blood rushed to his face.

It went greatly against his nature to quietly submit to the handcuffs, and the very thought gave him strength.

"They shall run for their prize," he said, with a bitter laugh.

And he ran onward at a fleet pace.

The officers plodded on heavily behind him, and he was soon lost to sight; but they determined they would not lose him easily.

Percy soon grew weary. The pace he had used could not be kept up long against the bitter, piercing wind, and he was forced to rest.

He looked about for a hiding-place, and found one in a hollow tree.

He only just had time to conceal himself when he heard voices, and the two men came up within a yard of him.

"I lost sight of him," said one.

"Then, depend upon it, he's gone down that road," said the other.

And both made a frantic effort to get quickly over the frozen snow.

Despite his misery, a smile hovered over Percy's face as he saw the dark figures retreating further and further.

His flight had been exciting and with the excitement came a certain amount of pleasure. But the pleasure faded out almost as soon as it had come, for the sound of wheels fell on his ear, rumbling on the frozen ground, and, as a carriage passed him, through the window he caught a brief glance of those within.

Lillian, pale and agitated, leaning on Bertie, who bent over her

Percy bent his head, and one great sob escaped him.

"I could have borne all if she had not deceived me!" he moaned.

Then he came out from his hiding-place, caring little now whether he was captured or not

He walked boldly in the middle of the road, his tall figure plainly visible. But his clever quickness before had put the officers off the track, and he walked on unmolested, and Christmas morning found him many miles away from the door that had been shut against him.

CHAPTER II.

A GARRET of the very poorest kind, almost devoid of furniture; a rusty, fireless grate; on the cracked and broken window-pane frost patterns had been traced by an icy hand; snow lay thick on the window sill, and icy fingers hung from a broken skylight overhead, and ice covered the water in an earthenware jug on the floor.

On one side stood a box and a comfortless,

blanketless bed, and on the bed lay stretched a man, shivering.

"One whole year gone!" he moaned. "Oh, Lillian, why did you deceive me?"

With a groan he turned his face to the white-washed wall.

It was dark, for the air was heavy with unfallen snow, but the time was only four in the afternoon—four o'clock in the afternoon of Christmas Eve, one year since Percival Royal was driven from his home; and the man lying on the bed was he.

He had toiled for that long, lonely year in a part where he was a stranger, believing that grief would bring death to his relief.

But grief had no power to kill. Death would not come, and he had returned to give himself up into the hands of justice from which he had fled, and pay the penalty of his brother's crime.

He was very weary of his bitter, restless life, and he turned about on his hard bed with a wistful longing in his blue eyes.

The clocks were striking, and they roused him with a start from his reverie.

He had fallen into a doze, and dreamt he was standing in the brightness and warmth of a flower decked lawn with Lillian by his side.

He started up, stretched his stiffened limbs, groped his way down the stairs, and went out into the busy streets.

He hardly knew which way to turn, and he wandered listlessly among the crowd.

He was standing for a moment watching some ladies pass from a shop into a carriage, when a hand was laid on his arm, and a voice said in his ear—

"Young man!"

A little old man stood at his side—a little old man with thin, straight grey hair, and thin wrinkled face, but with a loving, kind smile, and bright twinkling eyes.

"Young man," he continued, "I see by your face your life is not a happy one. Now it is my custom to make someone happy on Christmas Eve. You must come home with me."

Percy looked at the speaker in strange bewilderment, but before he could answer the little old man had taken his arm, and was leading him along

Before long they paused at the door of a handsome house, and, at a quick knock from Percy's new friend, the door opened, and Percy once more stood in a warm, bright hall

The old man led him to a room, and bade him prepare for dinner.

Percy looked round the room, and then threw himself with a strange delight on a velvet couch, and smiled as he had not smiled the whole year through.

Percy refreshed himself with a bath, and changed his clothes, for some laid on a chair for his use.

He felt strangely like his own old self again as he put on a brown velvet lounging-coat, which seemed to bring back a vivid recollection of one he used to wear.

He stood before a mirror, and saw the past year's misery had altered him but a little, only there was a deep, unsatisfied longing in his eyes.

When he was ready he opened the door, which appeared to be the signal which the new friend had been waiting for, for he accordingly appeared, and, taking Percy by the arm, led him down stairs.

"I hardly know what to say to you," began Percy, as the little old man made him sit down to dinner. "I have not had so much kindness for a whole long year."

"Say nothing, say nothing," answered he, rubbing his hands excitedly. "I'm a great deal too happy to want thanks. Why, I have been looking for you for six months past, and now I've found you."

"Looking for me?" said Percy, wonderingly.

"Yes. Eat your dinner, and I'll tell you afterwards.

But Percy was almost too anxious to eat any of the elegant repast. Dinner was dispatched with the greatest haste, and with the wine on the table, the old man began eagerly to speak.

"In the first place, my dear boy," he said, "my name is Ray—Mr. Stephen Ray, and I am a solicitor. I was employed by a very great friend of mine some months since on a very important business This friend of mine came to me in great distress, and I vowed, by God's help, to do the business well entrusted to my hands. I have completed that business to day in finding you."

And the little old man smiled as he watched the surprise on Percy's face.

"In finding me!" echoed Percy.

"In finding you," repeated Mr. Ray. "Were you not cruelly treated last Christmas Eve; were you not driven from your home a beggar; were you not wrongfully accused of your brother's crime? Ah! my dear sir, my business was to free you from that accusation, and restore you to your rights. I left no stone unturned, and when I had succeeded in tracing the crime to your poor deluded brother, I found him dangerously ill—dying I was in time to hear his confession, and before his father and Jones I took it down, word for word. The poor old soul died a few months after from grief for the loss of both his sons. He sent for me to make his will, and to restore to his son Percival the riches that were his due. The old man died in peace on having my promise that you should be found and brought once more inside the walls of your own home; but with these words on his trembling lips: 'I have been deceived—I have been cruelly deceived by my own son Bertie,' he died.

Percy could hardly believe what he heard.

"Bertie dead, my father dead!" he murmured.

"Yes; but none of that would have come to anything but for that friend of mine I mentioned to you just now—that friend who put the business into my hands," was the answer.

Percy looked up in much bewilderment.

"It was that friend," continued Mr Ray, "who drew the dying confession from Bertie's lips. It was that friend who, in spite of your father's belief that you were dead, insisted that you should be found, and made him make a fresh will, and it was that friend who kept me up to the search; it was that friend who pointed you out to me in the crowd to day, or else I should have passed you by."

Percy took the old man's hand in his

"Come, my boy, you must see that friend," and he led Percy into a small adjoining room, and, taking him to the fireplace, unhooked a picture in an oval frame from the wall, and put it in his hand.

Then standing beside him, with his hands clasped behind his back, he waited, while Percy gazed intently on the portrait.

It was the face, the dear, sweet face of Lillian, the woman who had been so precious to him, the woman he had loved beyond all others. What was all his new-found wealth compared with the love he had lost?

For some moments they were silent, but at length the old gentleman said—

"Come, we must not give way to gloom."

"Sir, where can I find her?" asked Percy.

Mr. Ray made no reply, but went to the door, and led in the beautiful Lillian.

She came forward with outstretched hands, her beautiful brown eyes filled with tears.

Percy drew back, though he longed to fold her in his arms

He remembered far too vividly, the scene he had witnessed in the conservatory, and in the carriage on the snow-covered road.

"Percy," she cried, "has the year of suffering only drawn you from me, instead of making your love as strong and true as mine?"

He took her hand, and told her simply and truly what he had seen, and how he believed he was deceived.

"I thought your love was given to Bertie," he said. "I thought the one being I believed true had proved false, and I lost my faith in everything from that moment."

But as he spoke he held out his arms to her, and she fell upon his breast, while convulsive sobs shook her frame.

"You thought I was false" she said, lifting her eyes to his face 'Oh, Percy, I am glad I did not have that knowledge to add to my bitterness. No, I was not false. When you saw me with poor Bertie, he was begging me, in an agony of mind to do something to save you. He did not tell me he had committed the crime, but he swore that you had not. I told him I had a friend," and she looked toward Mr. Ray, "who could help me, and he begged me to come that very night. You heard me promise him to come, and you saw us in the carriage on our way. Oh Percy, Percy, how could you believe me false?"

Percy drew her closer to him, and Mr. Ray left the room, that their first real joy might not be witnessed by other eyes.

The rapture of that moment fully repaid them for the pain they had both endured.

Christmas morning found them, with old Mr. Ray, once more at their old home.

They wandered through the rooms together, so gloriously happy in each other, that the bitter past was forgotten.

Worth has been making a court dress of pale blue satin for Lady Lytton. The train is of blue corded silk, faced with myrtle-green velvet, and has sprays of roses laid around its edge, and matching others which are set here and there among the curtain draperies of the front breadth. The roses lie on a band of velvet matching the train lining, and above them are two rows of Alencon point and a band of silver embroidery. The waist is pointed and has a surplice drapery of green velvet on the shoulder.

A man's excuse for stealing a pair of chickens, was that while at work he hung his coat near the coop, and on going for it he found the chickens roosted on the same. He hadn't the heart to wake them up, he said, so he wound his coat around them without wakening them, and carried them off. His defence was ingenious, but he was sent down for three months all the same.

A young man eloped with an Illinois girl, and abandoned her at Hays City, Kan., giving her a draft for $100, and advising her to return home, as he was going to Texas. She met with some delay in getting money for the draft, but as soon as possible she bought a horse, a revolver and some provisions, and started after the fugitive. Interesting news is expected from her.

Sister Elizabeth.

BY VIVIENNE.

NOTHING is more mortifying to a person, especially if that individual is a maiden lady of thirty-five, than the consciousness that others begin to consider her too old for the society of young people It is a "laying on the shelf" that is by no means agreeable.

At least, such was my feeling as I glanced at the invitations to a little moonlight excursion on the lake, which were handed in by John, while we were seated by our cosy breakfast-table in Snow Cottage one lovely morning in June. The note was directed to Miss Lottie and Miss Cornie Whittaker, not addressed, as previous envelopes had been, to the Misses Whittaker, which would, of course, include Elizabeth Whittaker, spinster. The last word I announced almost audibly, with a bitter smile, which attracted the attention of my pet, Cornie, who said tenderly—

"Sister Elizabeth, does your head ache this morning?"

How my heart yearned over that favorite sister of mine, the very image of her lost father! We were now laying aside the sable robes worn for three years in token of our loss; but it seemed to me that I should always wear the calm, sober tints of "second mourning," and in my inmost soul the memory of that idolized parent would ever be enshrined.

My own mother I cannot remember; she drooped and faded while I was an infant; and my stepmother, kind and indulgent as she ever was to me, was not one to call forth the ardent affection which but few had power to awaken in my heart. Gentle, dignified and reserved, she had bequeathed these same characteristics to her eldest child, the golden haired Lottie.

But Cornie was like our father, the same buoyant spirit, strong will, and impulsive affection, the same dark, curling hair, and eyes of laughing blue.

I thought of all this as I watched her fondly on that June morning, and recalled how I had been a second time orphaned when her mother was taken from us fifteen years ago. Since that time, when Cornie was four years old, she had been to me as much a daughter as a sister.

Lottie, who was five years her senior, had always been so self-reliant and womanly that I could never regard her as needing that loving watchfulness that our younger sister seemed to require; and the relation between us could never be so tender and affectionate.

As I reflected thus, long after we had left the breakfast room, and were seated in our little morning parlor, I reasoned with myself that it was but natural that I should be omitted in the plans for enjoyment formed by the young people of Caldwell The mothers were not invited with the daughters. Why should I expect to go with Cornie, my sister child?

These reflections made me more calm and content, and I could bid my sisters a smiling adieu when they left me early in the evening

Cornie came back to give me a second kiss, and whispered, "I wish you were going, too you old darling!"

"Old!" I repeated to myself. "Yes, that is the word."

And that night I looked more attentively than was my wont into my mirror, and tried to realize that I deserved the epithet. But I saw no threads of silver in my dark, heavy braids, and but few lines of care on my fair, broad forehead. Anyhow, my heart felt young, and with a sigh I tried to realize that I must accept the position in which of necessity I was placed.

The next morning my sisters were eager in their recitals of the charming walk and the delightful sail by moonlight. There had been a pleasant company

"Oh, Elizabeth!" said Cornie. "Do you know we saw an old friend of yours? And he is coming to call on you to day."

"An old friend of mine?" I queried.

"Yes," Lottie replied, "Mr Loftus; he is visiting at the Arments', and has just returned from a long foreign tour."

"Will Loftus!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible?"

I felt the warm blood tingling in my cheeks as if I had been only fifteen, instead of five and thirty. Memory was busy recalling the long-vanished summer, and how often I used to see my boy lover, since lost sight of for many years Ours had been one of those youthful attachments which but seldom ripen into first and only love. They are often but "the prelude to the strain, before the song is sung.' We were on the verge of an engagement when Will was suddenly recalled to his distant home, and I had seen him no more. Yet, foolish as it may have been, I had always kept one corner of my heart sacred to his name, and it was with a strange thrill that I heard he was again near me, and that I soon should see him.

That day he called with his friend, Harry Mills He was a tall, fine-looking man, polished, refined, and fascinating in his manners. I could hardly identify him with the slender youth that I had once known; but he referred so gracefully to our former acquaintance, and expressed so much pleasure at renewing the intercourse so suddenly interrupted, that I felt at perfect ease.

How pleasant were the days that followed. We called each other "Will" and "Lizzie" in the most friendly way, and Lottie and Cornie seemed already to regard him in a very sisterly manner. We read, walked and talked together, and night after night his deep, rich voice would accompany those of my sisters, while I played the old, familiar tunes upon the piano.

I fancied that my own voice might have lost a little of its early sweetness, and so did not attempt to join the others, whose melodies were so harmonious.

Several other invitations were sent us as of yore, to the Misses Whittaker, and I was fast forgetting that I was an old maid when, at an evening party, I overheard the envious and ill natured remark—

'Just see that Elizabeth Whittaker. What youthful airs she does put on! Trying to catch Mr. Loftus, I dare say."

How those words rang in my ears long after the lights, the music, and the dancing were shut out, and I was alone in my own room. How I catechised myself, and tried to reason with my poor, foolish heart. Yes, I had been trying to look young, and had appropriated Will's attention as a matter of course.

What right had I to monopolize his time? Was it not far more likely that he would choose Lottie or Cornie—if indeed he were to pay court to any of us? Even this was by no means certain; he might go again as suddenly as he had come; and I was startled to find what a sad void his departure would make in our circle, and still more in my own heart.

"Ah, Elizabeth,' Elizabeth," I soliloquised, "take warning ere too late!"

The next morning I rose with a new resolve firm in my mind; I would not yield to to the sweet delusions of love—would not, unasked, give my heart. The world should not have cause to laugh at the silly foolishness of an old maid. Strengthened by these purposes, I was better fitted for the trial that awaited me.

That very day Will Loftus came, and inquired for me alone I caught a quick glance passing between Lottie and Cornie as I left the room, and there was a more rapid pulsation at my heart as I entered the cool, dim room where he was seated.

"Elizabeth," he said, tenderly, as he took my hand, "do you know what a priceless treasure I have come to ask? I hardly dare to be so bold, and yet 'faint heart never won fair lady,' and I must not lose my courage."

"How very timid he has grown!" I thought. "Can he not see that he has but to speak to win?"

I smiled assuringly, and he proceeded.

"Do not think me precipitate in my affection, though the acquaintance has been so brief, for I cannot be mistaken in my feelings, and only wait your permission to offer my hand to your pet sister, Cornie. You stand in the place of a parent to her, and therefore I ask your consent."

Ah, Will, Will! It was well you could not read my heart just then!

With a mighty effort I choked down a convulsive sob, and replied that he had my full, free permission; and adding that I would send Cornie to him directly, left the room, a sadder and wiser woman.

There is not much to add. Cornie's love was already given to the handsome man so recently a stranger, and a very few months later she became his wife.

Lottie was the fair and stately bridesmaid, while I witnessed with a maternal complacency the ceremony which united the destinies of the only man I had ever loved and my child sister, Cornie.

Peace and contentment were my guardian angels that night, and with a serenity that was sincere and unaffected I returned the kiss which the bridegroom gave me, as he said, tenderly and gently, "Sister Elizabeth!"

A Lost Sailor's Prayer.—A curious story is told of a shipwreck of a large British collier, which foundered far out at sea last June, off the coast of California. The sole survivor was a Portuguese sailor named Lopez who was picked up lashed to a raft as he drifted in the path of an inward bound vessel for Puget Sound. He was taken to the Marine Hospital at Port Townsend, and after a week of skilful nursing became sensible so as to relate his extraordinary adventure. He had floated with a dozen companions helpless in the Pacific for ten days without food or water. One after another of his ship-mates died from thirst until he was alone with the last survivor and as he was dying Lopez said to him. "George, do you think you are going to God?" On receiving an affimative reply, Lopez added with all the intenseness of despair, "When you get where God is, tell him to send us some water." The dying man promised that he would do so, and soon breathed his last. Shortly after a copious shower fell and Lopez was enabled by its help to hold out until rescued as stated above, on the twenty-second day after the sinking of his ship.

There have been many definitions of a gentleman, but the prettiest and most pathetic is that given by a young lady. "A gentleman," says she, "is a human being combining a woman's tenderness with a man's courage."

OUR OWN FIRESIDES.

BY GEORGE NICKLING.

Our own firesides! may we ne'er see the face
Of the demon of discord there!
May the peaceful dove, on the wings of love,
Ever brood o'er the spot so dear!
Merrily, cheerily, sing we unwearily
The song of our own firesides.

Our own firesides! there's a glow of delight
Like a gleam from a golden shore
Comes dancing around, and alights with a bound
In the midst of the cheerful floor.
Merrily, cheerily, sing we unwearily
The song of our own firesides.

Our own firesides! may the joybells of peace
Ever chime on the chords of the heart,
While a garland of smiles, in beauty's own coils,
Will a charm to the circle impart.
Merrily, cheerily, sing we unwearily
The song of our own firesides.

Our own firesides! though the storm flies abroad,
There's a calm and a sunshine there,
While the music of love from the sphere above
Falls sweet on the listening ear
Merrily, cheerily, sing we unwearily
The song of our own firesides.

The Mistletoe.

BY C. C. SEATON.

"WHAT a beautiful bunch of mistletoe! Do you not think it is the finest you have seen this Christmas, mamma?" exclaimed Elsie Effingham, as she turned over a heap of evergreens which the gardener had brought in for the purpose of decorating the dining-room, which in the evening was to be the scene of a ball, to which all the people in the neighborhood were invited to celebrate Elsie's nineteenth birthday, and the eve of a new year.

"It is certainly a handsome piece, my dear," replied Mrs. Effingham.

"Ah, Elsie," said a younger girl, with a mischievous look, "what will Mr. Manley say to a mistletoe bough? I am afraid he will be too shocked to stay in the room."

"How foolishly you talk, Emily!" said Elsie. "One would think that Mr. Manley could not enjoy a laugh as well as anyone else."

"Anyhow," interrupted Mrs. Effingham, "I strictly forbid its being placed in this room. It is only suited for the kitchen. The rude romps and jokes to which it gives rise are quite unfit for young ladies."

"But, mamma, may I have it put over the supper table?" pleaded Elsie. "It cannot do any harm there, and may lead to some fun."

Mrs Effingham had no objection to such an arrangement and accordingly the branch of mistletoe was suspended just over the middle of the well filled supper table

The Effinghams were people of some importance in their neighborhood, Mr Effingham being a man of wealth. They had only two children, Elsie and Emily, the latter of whom was just fourteen years of age.

Mr. Louis Manley was a clerk in Mr. Effingham's office, and as he was well connected and of a most unexceptionable character he had been a pretty constant visitor at Effingham Lodge.

He was very handsome, and quiet in his manners, indeed, many thought him too sedate. He never flirted with any of the numerous young ladies who beset him with attentions, and had seemed almost indifferent to Elsie herself, the prettiest and the richest girl in the neighborhood.

The dining room, being the largest room in the house, was set apart for the dancing exclusively. An adjoining apartment was to be used as a promenade and retreat for those who were tired or preferred sitting

Elsie was delighted with the arrangement, and had scarcely finished the decorations in time to make her toilette.

She was standing before the glass debating what ornament she should wear in her hair, when the door opened and Emily entered, carrying a fine white camelia, set off to the best advantage by two or three of those glossy green leaves which so much enhance the beauty of the plant.

"Oh, Emily," exclaimed Elsie, "that is just the very thing I wanted, but John had only scarlet ones in the greenhouse, and I could not use any of them with the pink silk It never occurred to me that he might get one elsewhere. He has become unusually thoughtful, has he not?"

Emily made no reply, but seemed much amused as she handed the flower to her sister. A flush more rosy than the hue of her dress spread itself over her face and neck as she read on a slip of paper twined about the camelia, the words:

"With L. M.'s compliments and congratulations."

"What do you think of that for our quiet matter-of-fact Mr. Manley?" said Emily bursting into a merry laugh. "I did not think that he had so much sentiment in him."

"My dear child, how very foolish you are getting!" said Elsie; "do be sensible and tell me who gave this to you."

"I shall keep you waiting a long time, Mistress Elsie, although it is your birthday, if you speak to me in that way," returned Emily. "You are dying to know all the particulars—now are you not? Do confess! You will not? Ah! well, I will not be too cruel," laughed the saucy child; "you shall hear all I know. The redoubtable Mr. Manley was standing in the conservatory when John was looking for a white camelia, and when he could not find one Mr. Manley said, 'Tell Miss Effingham I will get one for her if possible,' and I suppose he has found it possible, as here it is. Let me put it in your hair for you."

The flower was fastened in Elsie's soft dark hair, and if the glass received a rather satisfied glance from the young lady we need not be surprised, for it certainly reflected a very fair image.

The tea was over, and the dancing began, but still there was no Louis Manley to be seen. The belle of the evening soon found her engagement card nearly filled, but Louis Manley's name was not on the list.

So frequently had she danced that it was not until late that she went into the adjoining room.

She stood at the door, and looking in, saw at the further end Louis Manley hanging over a lady's chair, paying her the most familiar and marked attentions.

It was enough for Elsie, she made some excuse to her partner and returned to the ball room without going any further; all her pleasure for the night was at an end.

The guests went to the supper room in parties, and when over, Elsie slipped away unseen, and managed to get into a small conservatory that opened by a glass door into the library where the refreshments were laid.

The room being brilliantly lighted, and the conservatory dark, Elsie amused herself by watching the couples as they sauntered in and out, perfectly aware that though she could see them they could not see her.

At last she saw Louis Manley enter with the lady on his arm, and a very handsome couple they were—a fact that even Elsie could not deny.

They sat themselves just under the mistletoe, and with burning indignation Elsie saw Louis Manley playfully tap his fair companion on the shoulder, and trifle with her long curls; while she chatted and laughed, quite unconcerned.

Then they both looked at the mistletoe, and seemed to be engaged in an argument as to its utility.

"Ah!" thought Elsie, "with all your sedateness, Mr. Manley, you would like to have taken advantage of the mistletoe; but never mind, you are disappointed."

She had scarcely said as much to herself, when she saw the gentleman jump up, break off a sprig of the mistletoe, hold it over the lady's head, and kiss her

With burning cheek, and an exclamation that nearly betrayed her, Elsie turned away, and at the same time snatching the camelia from her hair, she tore it to pieces

While Elsie was thus standing, lost in anything but pleasant musings, she was startled by hearing her own name spoken close behind her, and turning round, found herself face to face with Louis Manley.

Annoyed beyond measure, she would have given anything to escape, but it was impossible, and she did her best to brave it out; though fully conscious that there remained traces of tears on her face, and that the scattered leaves of the camelia were by her side to tell their own tale.

"I am feeling tired and heated, Mr. Manley," she began in a tolerably composed manner. "Are you looking for any one?"

"Yes," he replied; "your mamma sent me to look for you, Miss Effingham; you have been missing so long. Will you not allow me to get you some refreshment? If you are warm, you are scarcely wise to remain in this draught."

Elsie thought that the best thing that she could do was to comply and accordingly took his proffered arm.

Louis led her to the supper room, and they were soon seated just where Elsie had seen the strange tableau enacted.

She did her best to talk in her usually lively strain, but her sallies were a little too sarcastic to pass current.

Mr. Manley helped to a glass of wine, but made no effort to enliven the conversation. Elsie had no doubt that he was thinking what a rude fox-hunter she was to disarrow his really thoughtful present

She emptied her glass as quickly as possible, and managed to eat a biscuit, and then she proposed joining the rest of the party.

"No, please not yet," said her partner, with a look that a few hours ago would have made Elsie happy, whereas it now only made her end a conversation, which was every moment becoming more and more embarrassing

"No, Elsie, you must not go," he continued, in a constrained voice. "Where have you kept yourself all the evening? I have not caught a glimpse of you."

Elsie felt angry fancying that somehow he had guessed her secret, and was trifling with her, and replied very testily:

"I am quite at a loss to know what you mean, Mr. Manley, you must be aware that your attentions have been confined to the one who doubtless has the best right to receive them."

"Nay, Miss Effingham, that is rather a severe speech, and I am sure you will not get any one to coincide with you," replied Louis, speaking as though he had meant a joke.

Elsie saw this, and tried to carry on the illusion, saying in a bantering tone:

"No, no, Mr. Manley, not if they had seen that very pretty little scene under the ——," and she lifted her eyes to the mistletoe

At first Louis looked perplexed, but he soon burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

Surprised and vexed Elsie rose to leave the room, but again she was retained, by her companion saying in an eager voice, "Do allow me to explain my apparent rudeness, Miss Effingham Is it possible you do not know my sister?" exclaimed Louis, a half pleased, half amused expression stealing across his features

"Your sister, Mr. Manley!" reiterated Elsie. "I never knew you had a sister," she added, and the sense of relief that crept into her heart was depicted so visibly in her face that it would have told its own tale to one less interested in it than was Louis Manley. "Do introduce me," she continued, in a hurried tone; "you are really naughty not to have done so long ago."

Louis Manley had no intention of allowing such an advantage to pass by unimproved. He was quite quick enough to read the state of affairs and rejoiced to discover that the girl he had loved for months was not so indifferent to him as he had been led to fear from her gay bantering manner.

He had already the father's consent to win the daughter if he could, and thinking truly that he might never have another opportunity like the present, he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Not yet, Elsie; I have something more to say. May I claim a place in your regard? I do not speak without your father's approbation. Let me hope that one day you will be more to Adelaide than a friend. May I not introduce you to her as her future sister-in-law?"

We cannot tell exactly what answer Elsie gave; perhaps she could not tell herself; but it was not a very unfavorable one, if we may rely on Miss Emily's word, for she declared the next day that she had seen Mr. Manley kiss Elsie by the mistletoe, though he could not get under it.

Whether such was the case or not we will not pretend to say; all we know is, that they were partners in the country dance that finished the evening's amusements, and seemed the happiest of the happy, and the following day the gentleman had a long talk with papa in the very same library where still hung the mistletoe, looking faded and out of place—but never mind, it had done its duty.

Elsie as well had something of importance to communicate to her mother, to which the good lady seemed to listen with much complacency, and less surprise than the daughter had expected.

A STORY ABOUT LACE.—The most recent improvement in the production of lace is the introduction of shaded tints in the flowers and patterns, giving them the relief of a picture. The effect is produced by varying the application of the two stitches used in making the flowers—the "toilet," which forms the close tissue, and the "grille," employed in the more open part of the pattern. The system is so successfully applied to the laces of France that it has been adopted with the greatest success.

There is a legend regarding the introduction of this manufacture into Flanders A poverty stricken but pious young girl was dying of love for a young man whose wealth precluded all hope of marriage One night, as she sat weeping at her end late, a beautiful lady entered the cottage and, without saying a word, placed on her knees a green cloth cushion, with its bobbins filled with the fine thread which on autumn evenings float in the air, and which the people call *fils de la Vierge* The lady, though of romantic bearing, was a practical manufacturer. She sat down in silence, and with her nimble fingers showed the unhappy maiden how to make all sorts of patterns and complicated stitches. As daylight approached, the maiden had learned her art, and the visitor disappeared. The price of lace soon made the poor girl rich. She married the man of her choice, and, surrounded by a large family, lived happy and rich, for she had kept the secret for herself.

One evening, when the little folks were playing round her knee by the fireside, and her husband sat fondly watching the happy group, the lady suddenly made her appearance among them. Her bearing was distant; she seemed stern and sad, and this time addressed her *protegee* in a trembling voice

"Here," she said, "you enjoy peace and abundance where without me famine and trouble I helped you, you have not helped your neighbors The angels weep for you and turn away their faces"

So the next day the woman arose, and going forth with the green cushion and its bobbins in her hands, went from cottage to cottage offering to all who would be taught to instruct them in the art she had herself so miraculously learned. So they also became rich, and Bergues became famous for this manufacture.

THE TOAD MARKET OF PARIS.

BY the Jardin des Plantes in the old and quaint quarter of St. Marcel, Paris, you will find, every Wednesday morning, from spring to autumn, a very curious market place. From seven to nine A. M., your attention is called to an open space of ground, separated by a boarding from the street by a noise like unto that which greets the ears of tired Senators when the sun of day is meeting the twilight hour, and all frogdom on the banks of the Washington canal is chorously joyous and loud! We approach this market place so full of simplicity and sound. Young men in blue blouses, black silk caps, pert lacets, jaunty airs, big finger rings, dandy boots, greasy hair—parted down the middle—and prim moustaches, are the venders. In one hand they hold a little stick and when the sounds alluded to grow heathenish, whack! goes the stick on the top of a barrel whence these diabolical noises emanate, and silence reigns. The toads are momentarily dumb. We know there is a great deal of unlovable sentiment arrayed against toads, yet toads are full of love sentiment. A toad carries all its young in a most loving and sentimental manner, and why should not like beget like, if there be any truth in the doctrine of Aristotle? Much bad blood and malignity is got up against toads. This one of the young men in blouse tells me, in a foppish, half-philosophical way. Barrels of toads! Think of it! Barrels packed like barrels of potatoes! "Selling at 2 francs; 40 to 6 francs a dozen, prime toads! nice toads!" Who buys them? Vegetable gardeners. Why? For the reason that toads devour the insects that otherwise would devour the vegetables. Who devours the toads? Contrary to some ideas—not the French people. But toads are being sold now, not devoured, and it is with the selling we are interested. How do they vend them? Young man in blouse bares his arm and thrusts his open hand into the slimy swim and brings up two, three or four gymnastic toads, wriggling and writhing. He points out their merits and delivers them in a box by the dozen to the eager market gardener who takes his choice and pays his price. The buying and selling is done expeditiously and quietly. The revenue revenue to the Government is great, while the profit to the venders is greater, arising from this other peculiar Parisian baseness, the selling of toads. I addressed myself to one of the merchants: "Permit me to ask if you have been long in this business?" Merchant looks at me and laconically replies: "Born in it!" Then I resume and say, encouragingly: "You know a good deal about it?" He looks at me again and replies: "All!" I am uneasy as to his feelings, therefore change the attack by asking: "Does it pay well?" He deigns not to look at me now, but replies: "It does!" "Do you suffer much loss by death by packing the toads all of a mass in a barrel?" "I do not!" "Is it expensive to cultivate them?" "It is!" "How do you care for them and propagate them?" "We don't care much, and they propagate themselves!" "Where?" "Marshes and rocker es!" "Do you ever feel them out?" "Never!" "How do they live?" "Pretty well!" "Have you a large supply?" "Too large!" I look upon it as the concentrated assemblage of many toads, and I leave him

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Tilden and Vanderbilt are not the only pauper millionaires of the metropolis—that is, not the only men of colossal fortunes who "swear off" their personal taxes John Jacob Astor pays tax on only $80 000 worth of personal property; August Belmont doesn't pay any; James Gordon Bennett on $25 000; A. J. Drexel on $100 000; Joseph A. Harper "sworn off;" Mrs. A T Stewart on $500 000, Clarkson N Potter "sworn off;" Samuel J. Tilden on $90 000; William M Evarts on $25 000, Peter Cooper on $110 000, Cyrus W. Field "sworn off," and Hugh J. Jewett on $20 000.

There was a church fair at Silver City, Nev., and a wag put an advertisement in the local news that hugs would be sold as follows:—"Ten cents to hug any young lady between fifteen and twenty, five cents for young ladies between twenty and thirty, one dollar to hug another man's wife; old maids two for one cent, and ferninst the woman's right [etcetera free]." Inquiries for the hugging booth were numerous.

Two men were driving along a road that skirted a precipice, at Crawford Iowa, and rain and darkness came upon them They had heard that horses could see in the dark, and therefore let go of the reins trusting to their better instinct, but it happened that this horse was blind which fact they did not know until after a good many of their bones had been broken

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CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.—As soon as there is the slightest uneasiness of the chest with difficulty of breathing, or indication of cough, take instantly the day a few "Brown's Bronchial Troches."

A Great Discovery by a Great Man.

[illegible], a Medical Warrior of Safe Notoriety. The great man is one of the most famous living physicians. He found a harmless remedy for a kind of pain, others improved it and the final result is the Safe Nerve we now manufacture only by H. H. Warner & Co.

Our Young Folks.

A CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY PIPKIN

"PHILIP, I have a scheme."

"Oh, well, that's nothing new; you're always having schemes. Get away, can't you; girls are always coming where they are not wanted."

The tears stood in Maggie's eyes, but still she lingered a minute.

"It's about those little Carsons. Oh, Philip, if you only knew what a hole they lived in; and it isn't so very long till Christmas," said Maggie hesitatingly.

"Nearly three months," interrupted Philip.

"But we only get a little a week, and I was thinking if we could save up."

"Oh, good gracious, Maggie! I want to buy myself a paint box—I must have one, in fact."

"Very well," said Maggie with a little half-suppressed sigh; "then I suppose I must manage it alone."

"I do wish you wouldn't make such mysteries, Maggie. What has all this to do with the Carsons?"

"Why, father went to see them yesterday, and he says that now the father and mother are dead, that little Milly does all the work, and starves herself to feed the rest."

"Why don't they go into the workhouse?" suggested Philip.

Maggie shuddered. "You haven't been into the town lately, Philip; you forget what the 'house' looks like. Besides, their father made them promise they wouldn't before he died."

"Did he?" said Philip, and with that he went on mending his kite, while Maggie went into the drawing-room.

"Father," said Philip, a day or two after, "what are you doing to help those Carsons?"

Mr. Leighton looked down rather wistfully into the frank boyish face that was lifted so earnestly towards his own. Since his wife's death, his children had been his constant care and delight, and he was not slow to discern their thoughts.

"I pay for the nursing of the baby, my boy; but that's all I can afford just now."

"Father, you know that you promised that if I would save up seventy five cents towards a paint box, you would give me the rest."

"Yes, dear."

"Well, would you mind my using it for something else?"

Mr. Leighton glanced down at him sharply. "Please yourself, my boy."

"Thank you, father; how good you are!"

They were busy planting shrubs in the rectory garden, while Maggie finished her French exercise in the schoolroom.

Presently Mr Leighton called Philip's attention to a fine fir tree. "I think this must be what you had for your Christmas tree last year. By the by, perhaps you think you are growing too old for Christmas trees. Would you like to make some other use of it this year?"

"Might we carry it down to Milly Carson?"

"Do just what you like with it, Philip; I am not afraid to trust you, or Maggie either."

* * * * *

It was a cold windy night in December, and Milly Carson sat darning socks by the light of a farthing dip. She shivered a little, for the fire was very low and she had no more coal. All the children were in but Bob, who was away at work, and whom she awaited with some interest, for Bob would bring two dollars, but three fourths were owing for rent, and the rest would have to go for bread and firing.

"There's Bob!" said little ten year old Esther, springing to the door. Louie, the next child, was a cripple, so she had to sit still in her high chair, but she had the first kiss from Bob after all. Milly had brushed away the tears at the sound of her brother's step, and was now busy stirring the contents of a saucepan over the fire.

"Come and warm thee hands, Bob," she said, and then in an undertone she added, "what about the rent?"

The boy who was about two years younger than Milly, threw up his cap with a laugh before he hung it on the peg. "Why, Milly," he said, "my hands are as warm as hot buns, and the rent's all in the right place, but, I say, what do you think my master's been up to? It's a good ton o' first-rate coals; that's what it is, so there!"

"Oh, Bob!" exclaimed the breathless Milly, "then there's money to spare after all, for thou did not have to buy firing."

"Yes," he said, "that's what I want to talk to you about. First of all, I thought I'd have a bit of a holly tree for the children (Bob was just twelve) and then it seemed that was a silly notion, being as we'd scarce enough to eat, so I did think I'd get some stuff for a pudding, but I've changed my mind," and Bob folded his arms in a very decisive manner. "I've been hearing this night about the folk in India what's dropping down dead i' the street for want of bread and water." "Yes," he continued, as the children turned towards him with horror struck faces of pity and amazement, "yes Esther—dozens of them men and women an' little babes; an' if they're not helped their country will be one big graveyard."

There was a solemn silence in the room, and then little Louie said, "Let's give the money to them, Bob."

"Bless thee heart, Louie!" said Bob. "That's just what I was thinking, and that's why I didn't get the stuff for the pudding. The men in our shops clubbed together what they could spare, but I wouldn't give them ours till I'd asked you all at home, because, you see, it's yours."

"It's thy earnings," said Milly; "but it was kind to wait and I do think they want it the most."

"Shall I send 'em my top?" said Willie, at once bethinking himself of his greatest treasure.

Then there was a laugh; but Esther said, "Well it was very kind of him I'm sure! And Bob needn't have called me greedy, because I should like to send them the money as much as any of you." And when the children knelt down that night they all prayed for the poor starving people, but they somehow forgot to ask anything for themselves. Only little Louie said softly, at the end of her prayer, "Please, God, I should so like Willie to have a new cap—some day."

* * * * *

At about three o'clock in the afternoon of the following day Milly was startled by a loud rap. The snow was falling heavily, and she was rather startled when she opened the door, to see Maggie and Philip standing out in the cold with a heavily-laden market basket between them.

"Are the children all out?" Maggie asked; and then she blushed and frowned, and said to her brother, "You explain."

Philip set down the basket inside the house, took off his cap and shut the door, and then said rather abruptly:

"Please, don't be offended, but we should like to empty our basket."

Milly's brown eyes opened wonderingly. "Can I help you, sir?"

"I wish you would," said Philip. "Just take this 'grub' off to the larder. Stay, I'll carry the meat myself; it's rather heavy. The groceries will do for you to take; we thought they'd come in for a plum pudding."

"Yes they're all for you," said Maggie, with a bright smile. "Father sent the beef, and the apples and pears and potatoes are out of the garden; but Phil and I bought the groceries ourselves."

Philip turned crimson, and thrust his head into the cupboard, and then there was great bustling in disposing of the good things the two had brought.

When the little Carsons came home from church the next morning they were puzzled beyond measure to see the table set for dinner, with knives and forks, and to smell various suspicious and delightful odors suggestive of important cooking.

"My dears," cried Milly, with a little scream of delight, "there's roast beef and plum pudding, and potatoes, and apples, and——"

"Oh my!" screamed Esther, "she has been keeping all them things in the yard, and that's why we mightn't open the yard door."

"Is I to have a little taste too?" said Willie, "or is there only a little of it?"

"Thou shall have twenty tastes, my precious," said Milly. "There's more than we can eat in a day, I do believe."

"Do you think," said Louie, "we might send a little taste of the pudding to the blind lady?"

"Let's ask her in," said Bob. "But, I say, Milly, where did it all come from?"

"I'll dish up now," said Milly, "and you can all guess afterwards."

The secret was all explained at dinner-time, and when Philip and Maggie came to tea, no king or queen ever received a more adoring welcome, and certainly kings and queens have seldom felt so happy as they did.

When the tea things were all cleared away Philip begged Bob and Esther and little Willie to run to the end of the street and post him a letter.

Louie might stay, he said, on condition that she shut her eyes and stopped her ears. Then he and Maggie opened the back door and carried in the tree out of the yard, Milly helping them.

When the children came running in, and Louie was allowed to open her eyes that little bare room became a veritable paradise. The blind lady had been allowed to stay, and Philip had rushed out before tea to fetch a favorite kitten expressly for her. The tree was radiantly beautiful, and covered with bright pretty things. There was a cap for Willie, a book for Louie, and a bright scarf for Esther. Best of all, there was a great coat which Philip had outgrown, and which Mr. Leighton had offered him for Bob, besides a beautiful warm jacket which had once been Maggie's, and just fitted Milly.

As the tapers died out the children all sang a Christmas hymn, and when it was over Mrs Gordon kissed them all and said good-night.

"I think," she said, "the Lord Christ is glad to have his birthday kept so."

As Maggie and Philip were walking home in the starlight, Philip put his arm around his sister's neck and kissed her.

"I say Maggie," he said, "I don't think I ever had such a happy day in my life, and let's do it again."

Cerebrations.

CONDUCTED BY "WILKINS MICAWBER."

Address all communications to Wilkins Micawber, No. 644 North Seventeenth St., Philadelphia, Pa. Solutions and original contributions solicited.

MICAWBER'S REPORT.

BY PERCY VERE.

In February, '79,
We started CEREBRATIONS,
And to each Poser in the 'Dom,
We sent out invitations
To help our enterprise along—
Quite nobly they responded;
And not a single, solitary,
Puzzler has absconded.
They sent their best productions,
To enhance our Puzzle Column
Comprising Anagrams and Squares,
And Crypto-what-do-you-call-'em?
And all the biggest Diamonds
Soon found a place in line,
And were labelled for insertion
On Micawber's "filing line."
We kept an honest record
Of the Contributions sent us,
And with all the perspicuity
Pertaining to the Centaurs;
We labelled them "accepted,"
Or "rejected," as the same
Were worthy recognition,
Or were found too bad or tame.
Each week we offered Prizes
For the largest list of Answers,
To which the Boys responded
Like so many necromancers;
And it speaks well for their courage,
While it makes our bosom glow—
When we see a single Solver
Solving Cerebrations so!
And so it went, week after week,
With interest unabated
Did Cerebrations come to time,
And with the best was rated
And all the puzzlers vied among
Themselves to keep it going,
Enabling us at least to make
A creditable showing.
Of course it is impossible
To render the statistics
Of all the Squares and Anagrams
The Crosswords and Acrost'cs
Which have appeared from time to time:
Our space is far too small—
But the sum 550,
Will emmierate them all.
So we have glided onward,
Like the placid ocean currents
Marred but by one calamitous
And very sad occurrence—
And doubtless, too, his fellow posers
Mourned him far and wide
When our friend and brother-editor
Tim Linkinwater died.

So now the Books are balanced
And we find our "stock on hand,"
Is, item first, a host of friends,
All over this broad land,
And item two—but never mind,
We'll close the statement here
And wish you "Merry Christmas"
And a happy, happy year.

ANSWERS.

No. 527. HYPASPIST.

No 528.
S I R
A D A
T A P

No 529. A BIRD.

No. 530.
S H O G
H E N R
A R K A
V A T S
R M Y S

No. 531. Money makes the mare go.

No 532.
W I T C H
I B O L A
T O P A Z
C L A R K
H A Z E L

No. 533.
1. PHILIP SHERIDAN.
2. MARTIN LUTHER.
3. BENEDICT ARNOLD.
4. AARON BURR.
5. ALEXANDER POPE.

No. 534.
T E S T E R
E X T I N E
S T A N G S
T I N K L E
E N G L U E
R E S E R E

No. 535. MOCHA STONE.

No. 536.
H O P E M A N
O D O R I N E
P O L E N T A
E R E C T E R
M I N T A G E
A N T E G O N
N E A R E S T

No. 537. RANSACK.

No. 538.
T E R A P H I M
C A M E L E O N
N U B U L A T E
M A C U L A T E
L I G U L A T E
C A S E M A T E
S A G E N I T E
T I M O R E S E

No. 539. NUMERICAL.

One day last week, on Nassau street,
I saw a 1 to 4
Who're 1 to 5 were advertised,
By showing a full line,
Some outside were, some inside were,
Some showed the marks of time.
Some of them new, and old ones, too,
And 6—no more 6 to 9,
Prepared to buy, resolved was I
One of them should be mine.

I looked them o'er, took 1 to 4,
And left the 5 to 9.

New York City. EPPENDI.

No. 540. SQUARE.

(To "Ef Fen.")

1. A wall. 2. A female name. 3. Cut off. 4. Parts of an arch. 5. To recall vividly. 6. One who makes a beginning. 7. A token.

Baltimore, Md. HAL HAZARD.

No. 541. CROSSWORD.

In sea-lion not in coon,
In sky-lark not in loon,
In sea-kale not in pink,
In sea-bear not in mink,
In sea-calf not in buck,
In sea-gull not in duck.
'Tis a fish—more I'll not tell,
Find its name, and all is well.

Dunkirk, N. Y. MY DOT.

No. 542. SQUARE.

1. To hinder from going forward. 2. Those who gaze idly about. (Rare.) 3. Stays. 4. A chemical base. 5. A story. 6. A hollow ball. 7. A hard substance growing on a horse's leg.

Gibson, Pa. ODOATER.

No. 543. CHARADE.

(To order.)

A letter was brought to me to-day,
From a FIRST whom all Puzzlers know well;
It read:—"My Dear Thomas, I pray
That you send me by mail, or by telegraph, a short rhyming Charade
For my Column, and please have it made
Ere the moments, (as quickly they pass,)
Have added a day to your LAST,
And Time has inverted his glass
And counted that day with the past.
I shall be much indebted to you
If this you will TOTAL to do."

New York City. TOM ASCAT.

No. 544. SQUARE.

(Respectfully inscribed to "Capt. Cuttle.")

1. A specimen. 2. A shrub. 3. A town of France. 4. A Roman officer. 5. An order of Sisters founded in 1812, in Kentucky. 6. One of the Princes of Germany. 7. To cure.

Lexington, Ky. FLEWY ANN.

No. 545. ENIGMATICAL NUMERICAL.

George Washington would load his 1
With powder, yet 'twas not a gun.
(In shooting balls, a Gatling gun
Is "grand discounted" by a 1.)
When maidens fall in love with 2,
Be very careful what you do.
(The wisest thing—some style—to do
Is hang yourself upon a 2.)
Like Richard of the lifeless 3,
I sing of what I chance to see.
(If "Pinafore" you chanced to see
You said "What! Never?" so did 3.)
Who touches but a single 4,
Will soon his foolishness deplore,
(His foolishness he will deplore
Unless he lets the poor thing 4.)
Most lexicographers describe
A WHOLE "to mean a taunt or gibe."

Rondout, N. Y. O. W. L.

No. 546. SQUARE.

1. A white wine. 2. Standing erect. 3. A little sir. 4. A town of W. Germany. 5. A choir-desk. 6. That which is within. 7. A base species of hawk.

New York City. JARSF.

No. 547. DOUBLE CROSSWORDS.

In jay-bird not in duck,
In honor not in luck,
In nonsense not in wit,
In Gladstone not in Pitt,
In pepper not in rice,
In handsome not in nice,
In Winter not in May,
In midnight not in day,
In service not in pay,
Companions in glory,
Partners in fame.
FIRST, warlike and gory,
What is thy name?
LAST true, unassuming,
Joyous and free,
A rose that is blooming
Brighter for thee,
Spurn not her hearts' treasures
Cast at thy feet,
Else sorrows for pleasures,
Justice will meet.

Lima, Ohio. TRADDLES.

No. 548. SQUARE.

1. One who utters. 2. A titanic iron ore. 3. A genus of plants. 4. More frightful. 5. A city in Ireland. 6. A beginner. 7. Bringers up.

Sedalia, Mo. EF FEN.

No. 549. CHARADE.

A narrow piece of woven work,
A fillet or a band,
Is what the housewives designate
As FIRST throughout the land.
A circle or a rounded line
My SECOND will unfold.
And when you give your girl this gift
Be sure it's made of gold.
Wherever you see our "stars and stripes,"
Set on land or main,
Please notice how the staff is formed
As TOTAL will explain.

Newark, N. J. KNOBY WEAT.

No. 550. SQUARE.

1. A river in Yucatan. 2. A fruit-bearing shrub. 3. A province of Venezuela. 4. A seaport of Brazil. 5. Placed. 6. The highest class of envoys sent from the Pope. 7. Remains.

New York City. WAVERLY.

ANSWERS NEXT WEEK.

PRIZES FOR SOLUTIONS.

1. The POST six months for FIRST COMPLETE list.
2. The POST three months for NEXT BEST list.

SOLVERS.

Cerebrations of November 22d were solved by Asian A. Solver, Maud Lynn, Waverly, Odoacer, Dick, J. C. M., Lochinvar, Alec. Sander, Effendi, Percy Vere, Grebrennaw, Will Wimble, C. C. C. La., Mrs. Wickleby, O. Possum, Traddles, Gahmew, Peggotty, Hannah B Gage.

COMPLETE LISTS.—Asian, A. Solver, Maud Lynn, Waverly, Odoacer.

PRIZE WINNERS.

1. Asian, - - Baltimore, Md.
2. A. Solver, - - Keuton, Ohio.

LITTLE LETTERS.

ALL OF YOU—Compliments of the Season.

WILKINS MICAWBER.

OLD SAKE'S SAKE.

BY S. E. PHILLIPS.

For old sake's sake all's over
That charmed us both of old:
Friend, mistress, wooer, lover;
Ah, ashes gray and cold
Lie thick where once the embers
Were so bright and strong to wake:
Yet, still dead, one remembers,
And more, for old sake's sake.

Now the touch is light and careless,
The voice is quick and stern,
Where love, secure and fearless,
Sits, change and loss to learn;
Since he spread his wings and left us
We have faced and lived our lives:
But, though time has sore bereft us,
Our memory still survives.

Though all is dimmed and altered
Since our Eden days were done,
Though many a purpose faltered,
In the pride of youth begun;
Yet, because we two together
Laughed, cried, and dreamed and woke,
Because of golden weather,
Before the storm-cloud broke,

Each yet has for the other
Some subtle secret charm,
That nor Time's slow moss can cover,
Or the world's keen sneer disarm;
And I think, whatever end, dear,
Life's varying course may take,
We will meet as friend and friend, dear,
And just for old sake's sake.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

EVERY first of January that we arrive at is an imaginary milestone in the turnpike road of human life; at once a resting place for thought and meditation, and a starting point for fresh exertions in the performance of our journey. Upon this day we dream of our past, and build hopes and anticipations for the future. We might moralize for hours; but our object is to show the manner of celebrating New Year's Day in olden and modern times.

A custom, now nearly obsolete, of making presents upon this day was practiced by the Druids, who distributed branches of the sacred mistletoe, cut with peculiar ceremonies, as New Year's gifts among the people. Nonius Marcellus refers the origin of this practice among the Romans, to Titus Tatius, King of the Sabines, who, having considered as a good omen a present of some branches cut in a wood consecrated to Strenia, the goddess of strength, which he received in the first day of the new year, authorized the custom afterwards, and gave these gifts the name of Strenæ, 747 B. C. The bestowing of presents was made by some of the Emperors an important source of personal revenue, until Claudius prohibited demanding presents except on New Year's Day.

The Saxons continued celebrating this day with more than ordinary feasting and joviality and presenting gifts to each other, even during the middle ages; and Henry III. is said to have extorted New Year's gifts from his subjects. When it was fashionable to give gloves as presents, Sir Thomas More, then Lord Chancellor, decided a case in favor of a lady, who sent him a New Year's present of a pair of gloves, with forty golden angels in them. He returned the gold with this note:—"Mistress, since it were against good manners to refuse your New Year's gift, I am content to take your gloves; but as for the *lining*, I utterly refuse it."

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, pins were brought into use, and proved very acceptable to ladies; hence the money given for the purchase of them was called "pin-money," and was usually given by a husband to his wife on the 1st of January. The custom of presenting New Year's gifts to the Sovereign of England may be traced back to the time of Henry VI. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the custom was carried to an extravagant height; the gifts presented were of great value, and an exact descriptive inventory of them was made every year in a roll, which was signed by the Queen herself and the proper officers. We find in an old book an accurate transcript of five of these rolls. The Earl of Leicester's New Year's gifts exceeded those of any other noblemen in costliness and elaborate workmanship. In the reign of James I., many gifts were continued, but the ornamental articles presented were few, and of but small value.

In Paris, the custom of giving presents is still observed; and New Year's Day there commences at an early hour, by the interchange of visits, presents, and bon-bons. In visiting and gossiping the morning is passed; a dinner is given by some members of the family to all the rest; and the evening concludes, like Christmas Day, with cards, dancing, or any amusement that may be preferred.

A superstition in regard to New Year visits is illustrated by the following anecdote:—A gentleman of Preston had been for years in the habit of calling on an aged lady friend, at her request, at any early hour of the New Year's day; he being a fair-complexioned person, she assumed his call to be of good omen for the events of the year. On one occasion he was prevented from attending to his old friend's request, and her first visitor proved to be a dark-complexioned man; in consequence of which there came that year sickness, trouble, and commercial disaster.

The etiquette of New Year's calls is strictly observed throughout many cities of this country. In New York it is not customary for New Year's receptions to begin before eleven in the morning. Ladies generally receive their friends in full reception costume, trained dresses, and their hair dressed as for an evening or dinner party. In some houses the rooms are darkened, and gas supplies the place of daylight. The Christmas evergreens are left on the walls; and to them are added fresh flowers, more or less rare and costly according to the style of entertainments. Refreshments are spread in the back parlor or dining-room, and the lady of the house accompanies her guests to the refreshment tables. When a gentleman calls, he remains but a few minutes. Hat in hand, he enters the parlor, shakes hands with the lady of the house, bows to the persons who may be present, lingers a few minutes, and then passes to the refreshment-room. Returning, he bows to or shakes hands with his hostess, and retires to make way for others. The refreshment table is a very nice point. Some ladies furnish what would be considered a sumptuous ball supper; but of late years it has been considered unnecessary to serve any but the lightest viands.

BORROWED FINERY.—It is a matter of policy, if nothing more, to be polite at home, or the assumption of politeness abroad will be an awkward attempt. The person who allows his wife, for instance, to pick up her handkerchief in private will render the service with such a poor grace in public that an acute observer will fail to be deceived. She who is in the habit of losing her temper at home will not always succeed in keeping it abroad. Too many hang up their company manners with company dress, quite glad to get rid of both. Yet it seems to us that if fine behavior were innate, it would be displayed naturally at one's own fireside, since, to use a homely phrase, what is bred in the bone will appear in the flesh. Why is it that one who will permit the members of his own household to wait upon themselves, and upon him, too, without demur, will yet fetch and carry for a stranger with alacrity? It is because the one is an exception, and the other might become a rule, and this is a case in which exceptions do not prove the rule? Does he fancy that these little attentions are wasted upon the home circle? that the approval or applause of a guest or a chance acquaintance is more important to his welfare than that of his own kith or kin? Or, being already certain of this regard, does it never occur to him that they may not feel so sure of his esteem while he omits all the little elegancies of manner which he readily accords to the public? Politeness, like charity, should begin at home. M. S.

Grains of Gold.

Good character is above all things else.

A grain of prudence is worth a pound of craft.

You will never lose by doing a good turn.

Nothing overcomes passion more than silence.

He who has nothing to do has no business to live.

Want of good sense is the worst of all poverty.

It costs more to avenge wrongs than to bear them.

A fine coat may cover a fool, but never conceal one.

A grand safeguard for doing right is to hate all that is wrong.

Speculation is a word that sometimes begins with its second letter.

We have little pity for others until we are in a situation to claim it ourselves.

Act well for the moment and you have performed a good action for all eternity.

To know how to listen is a great art; it is to know how to gain instruction from every one.

There is a closer connection between good sense and good nature than is commonly supposed.

A wise man may be pinched by poverty; but only a fool will let himself be pinched by tight shoes.

If thy conscience smite the once, it is an admonition; if it smite thee twice, it is a condemnation.

Do not be dogmatic in your assertions, arrogating to yourself much consequence in your opinions.

No one can be happy without a friend, and no one can know what friends he has until he is unhappy.

We learn to climb by keeping our eyes not on hills that lie behind, but on the mountains that rise before us.

"Too late," and "no more" are the mournful sisters, children of a sire whose age they never console.

Order is the sanity of the mind the health of the body, the peace of the city, the security of the State.

Some men in the world advance like crabs, by their eccentricities—walking contrary to everyone else.

Canting bigotry and caressing criticism are usually the product of obtuse sensibilities and a pusillanimous will.

There is no saying shocks us so much as that which we hear very often, that a man does not know how to pass his time.

Don't despise the small talents; they are needed as well as the great ones. A candle is sometimes as useful as the sun.

Maintain dignity without the appearance of pride; manner is something with everybody, and everything with some.

Be easy of address and courteous in conversation, and then everybody will think it a pleasure to have dealings with you.

Inviolable fidelity, good humor, and complacency of temper outlive all the charms of a fine face, and makes the decay of it invisible.

A disposition to calumny is too bad a thing to be the only bad thing in us; a vice of that distinction cannot be without a large retinue.

There is a great deal of unmapped country within us which would have to be taken into account in explanation of our gusts and storms.

Any one can drift, but it takes prayer, religious principle, earnestness of purpose, constant watching to resist the evil of this world—to struggle against the tide.

There is nothing so certain, we take it, as that those who are the most alert in discovering the faults of a work of genius, are the least touched with its beauties.

Stiff necks are always diseased ones, and trees that are hollow are the most unbending; but their inflexibility is the product and proof of unsoundness rather than of strength.

In all waters there are some fish which have to swim against the stream; and in every community persons are to be found who delight in being opposed to everybody else.

Do not contradict. In making a correction say "I beg your pardon, but I had an impression that it was so and so." Be careful in contradicting, as you may be wrong yourself.

The single act of sin, like the solitary seed, unfolds itself in ever-branching stems of wickedness, which tyrannize over the soul, and terrify the drowsy conscience into silence.

Do not be too lavish of your praise of various members of your family when speaking to strangers: the person to whom you are speaking may know some faults that you are not aware of.

A conscience void of offence is an inestimable blessing, because it gives a pleasure which no rancorings of malice can destroy; it is proof against malignity itself, and smiles upon its most sanguinary efforts.

Femininities.

Mrs. John J. Astor's carriage is silver-mounted and lined with red satin.

When a man calls his wife's maid "an angel," it's time for the wife to make her fly.

If a girl marries a coachman she must not be surprised if he insists on holding the reins.

If a man really wants to know of how little importance he is, let him go with his wife to the dressmaker's.

For a pretty woman to wear too many jewels is as foolish as to put three feet of gilt frame to one foot of picture.

Notwithstanding all the modern improvements of husbandry, the matrimonial harvest is still gathered with the cradle and thrashed by hand.

The highest ambition of a Roman girl is to marry a sentimental macaroni muncher and sit with him on the back stairs of the Coliseum by moonlight.

Custom compels an Icelander to kiss every woman he meets. What surprises him the most is the unusual number of old maids that are always going the wrong way.

Wife murder is becoming so common that a woman about to wed should make her husband sign an agreement, stating how many years he intends allowing her to live.

The woman who works in some honorable way to maintain herself loses none of the dignity nor refinement of true womanhood, and is much more an ornament to her sex than the woman whose days are passed in indolence and indulgence.

A young wife remonstrated with her husband, a dissipated spendthrift, for his conduct. "Love," said he, "I am like the prodigal son; I shall reform by and by." "I will be like the prodigal son, too," she replied, "for I will arise and go to my father."

He thought he had married a spiritualistic young creature with æsthetic tastes. The first Sunday she ate three platefuls of dinner and two rounds of brown bread. He says it was the most enthusiastic æsthetic taste he ever met with since he saw the lions in the circus fed.

The Duchess of Edinburg is very gracious to the Americans she meets in society, and will converse with them for hours in French or German. She rarely uses English, though she speaks it to perfection. Her preference for any other language arises, the gossips say, from her dislike for everything English.

A woman who had buried four husbands was sadly contemplating their pictures. "Your poor father is in heaven, I hope," she said to her little five-year-old. "Which one, mamma?" inquired the little innocent. "Why your own, own dear father." "And are the others all burned up?" The mother didn't answer the conundrum.

It is related that a Yankee who had just lost his wife was found by a neighbor emptying a bowl of soup as large as a hand basin. "Why, my goodness, Elanthus," said the gossip, "is that all you care for your wife?" "Wal," said the Yankee, "I've been crying all the mornin', and after I finish my soup I'll cry another spell."

A noted Texas lawyer who had lately become insane, stood up in church and asked a young lady to come forward and marry him. The young lady was so surprised and shocked that she fainted. This is believed to be the first instance on record where a man has escaped matrimony through the temporary weakness of the other side.

The wife of a defeated candidate for a State office in this State, the day after the election presented her husband with triplets. He did not arrive at home until the next day, when he was shown his offspring, one at a time, until all three had been exhibited, when, looking quizzingly down at his wife, asked: "Are the returns all in, M'riah?"

All human hearts have at some time a desire to love and be loved. A loveless life is a starved life. Love warms human nature; it sets it on fire. The affections can receive their highest development only in marriage. The loves between friends are poor and transient; but the love between man and woman in a perfect marriage is something divine—heavenly.

There comes a time in a young man's experience when it suddenly dawns upon his youthful mind that life is stern and real, and that only by the severest labor and greatest self-denial can he hope to accumulate even a modicum of wealth. Then he promptly marries a girl with a wart on her nose and goes home to live with her sixty-thousand dollar parents.

Fort Wayne Ind., has had a case of romantic courtship. Because the father of Miss Mary Harmon objected to her marriage with young Calvin Cogwell, young C. C. became insane and had to be taken to the State Asylum. The other night he escaped from the asylum and she from her father's abode. They were married, and young Cogwell is once more in his right mind.

Mrs Mary Holbrook, who died in Massachusetts a few days ago, aged ninety-three years, was a remarkable woman. When seventy-five years old she began the manufacture of tidies, which found ready sale in Boston, and were so much sought for that she was obliged to employ several old ladies to do the coarser work while she filled in the finer parts with her own hands. In this way, up to her ninetieth year, she netted $6000 from her sales.

Many of the satirical aspersions cast upon old maids tell more to their credit than to their disadvantage. Is a woman remarkably neat in her person, "She will certainly die an old maid." Is she frugal in her expenses, and exact in her domestic concerns, "She is cut out for an old maid." And if she is kind and humane to the animals about her, nothing can save her from the appellation of "an old maid." In short, we have always found that neatness, modesty, economy, and humanity are the never-failing and admitted characteristics of an old maid.

A Wisconsin girl started through the deep snow to walk six miles to a village for provisions, the family larder being empty. She soon became tired out, besides losing her way, and the cold was intense. A big Newfoundland dog which accompanied her was the means of saving her life. She scooped out a hollow in the snow, lay down in it, and made the warm dog lie on her, shifting him about so as to successively cover the coldest parts of her body. In that way she passed a whole night, and was not very severely frost-bitten. "With two or three more dogs," she says, "I would have got along very comfortably."

Lucrine.

Millions in it—The Sub-Treasury.

Parts unknown—On a bald head.

Now is a good time to lay in your winter's cold.

Fall fashions—Coal hole covers are worn smooth.

It's hard to fool castor oil—that is, it's hard to take it in.

The meanest bark of a dog is when he barks your shins with his teeth.

The man who borrows five dollars is still suffering from the panic of '73.

The monotony of a man's life is generally due to the fact that he has no change.

Why is a glass of fresh lager like a mad dog? Because it froths at the mouth.

"Arise, my sole, arise!" sang the cruel parent, as he raised Alfonso off the front stoop.

Many a man who puffs at mounting a flight of stairs will run up an account with the greatest ease.

When we look West we feel that we would like to see an Indian fall instead of an Indian summer.

The most universally-known man in the world is the man who will sing when he don't know how.

It has been ascertained, after patient investigation, that coal ships average three tons of coal each.

According to the scriptures "nothing was made in vain," but a freshly engaged young woman comes near it.

Any small boy who has green apple experience knows the misery that is brought to a party by internal disputes.

A Hindoostan work on music says that "music is the painfully acquired art of speaking very loud in a shrill voice."

A thorough man of the world is one who can shake hands cordially with a friend whom he has just blackballed at a club.

If a hunter will only hunt long enough he will be sure to pull his gun over the fence by the muzzle, and the day he does that he quits hunting.

They say "a man is known by his associates." Of course he is; a man can't associate with people for any length of time without their knowing him.

The man who, wishing to know the pronunciation of a word was advised to consult authorities, interviewed the Mayor, three Aldermen and the Sheriff.

The men who last summer lied about the number of fish they caught, are now crushing the truth to earth with the weight of the rabbits they say they have shot.

A French wit says that the gibbet is a species of flattery to the human race. Three or four persons are hung from time to time for the purpose of making the rest believe that they are virtuous.

A man with a very large bald head was highly complimented on the fact that his cranet was analogous to Greenland. "Why so?" he asked. "Because it is a great white bare place," was the reply.

Chinamen are leaving Paradise, Nevada, under the impression that the devil has his headquarters there. This natural belief arises chiefly from the fact that stolen wood and giant-powder cartridges go together there.

A pamphlet is just published which broaches the marvellous theory that "a man is what a woman makes him." According to the author's dictum we presume that when a wife makes her husband a pudding, he is a pudding.

"There is nothing like settling down," said a retired merchant confidentially to his neighbor. "When I gave up business I settled down, and found I had quite a comfortable fortune. If I had settled up I shouldn't have had a cent."

"How are you to-day?" asked a benevolent physician of one of his Irish patients at the hospital. "Faith, doctor," groaned the poor fellow, "I'm that bad that if any one was to tell me that I was clane dead, I would not be surprised at all."

An East Saginaw paper alluded to an eminent citizen as "a noble old burgher, proudly loving his native State;" which neat little compliment came from the compositor's hands thus: "A nobby old burglar, prowling around in a naked state."

The other day, as two friends were talking together in the street, a donkey began to bray, and wheeze, and cough in a distressing manner. "What a cold that donkey has!" said one of the men. "And, by the way, that puts me in mind—how is your cough?"

There is nothing so charming as the innocence of children. "Mamma," said a five-year-old the other day, "I wish you wouldn't leave me to take care of baby again. He was so bad I had to eat all the sponge cake and two jars of raspberry jam to amuse him."

There is nothing more essential in this world than ballast. It is even necessary to the poet. His ethereal flights would sometimes become too high were it not that his wife occasionally protrudes her head through the door and announces that the dog is chasing the chickens.

"Your visits remind me of the growth of a successful newspaper," said Uncle Jabez, leaning his chin on his cane, and glancing at William Henry, who was sweet on Angelica. "Why so?" inquired William Henry. "Well, they commenced on a weekly, grew to be a tri-weekly, and have now become daily, with a Sunday supplement."

During the dinner the conversation happened to fall upon the household affairs. A gentleman said, carelessly, "It is very disagreeable to be obliged to dismiss an old servant, but still I must get rid of my valet?" "Why?" "I have been asking for a foot-bath for the last eight years. He has never thought of it, and really I cannot do without one any longer."

WHEN MIND AND BODY ARE OUT OF SORTS, with cold extremities, a yellowness in the skin, costiveness, dull headache, and an indisposition to stir about, be sure you are in for a Bilious Attack, springing from a more or less Disordered Liver. Dr. Jayne's Sanative Pills will bring the Liver to a healthy condition, and speedily remove all biliary distress.

New Publications.

The Little Red Stocking is the title of a charming and pathetic Christmas story by Mrs Jas. F Hibberd, several of whose stories have appeared in our columns under her nom de plume, Faith Wynne. It is a story about two lovable loving little children, a big sagacious dog Rex, and a dissipated father, and hard working mother. The children have their hopes of a visit from Santa Klaus, in which the little red stocking and the big dog play an important part, but are instrumental in bringing back the erring repentant father to join in the Christmas joys. It is told in a very pleasing simple style, well calculated to win the hearts of the little readers and make it a welcome addition to the best of childrens' stories. For sale by Porter & Coates.

Under the title of "Nana," Emile Zola presents his sequel to L Assommoir, and although in no way resembling it, it is as equally realistic and furnishes as powerful a denunciation of another phase of society It is elaborated with the same care and intensity, and can be regarded as a perfect photograph of the manners and life of a class in real life whose sole object is to be amused. The translator Mr. John Sterling has performed his work very carefully Part One is announced by the publishers, T B. Peterson & Bros Price, 50 cts.

Under the title of Shakspeare's Morals, Mr. Arthur Gilman has published through Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co, a valuable collection of selected passages, the object of which is well worthy of the care and skill in which they have been compiled. The compilation consists of such passages from Shakspeare as will furnish an illustration of that poet's conception of morals The passages are classified under appropriate headings, accompanied by quotations of a similar character from other writers and brief scriptural references. The compilation is arranged with the artistic excellence, which characterizes all of Mr. Gilman's literary work, and it will prove a valuable book of reference. It is handsomely bound and printed. Price, $1.50.

Thomas W. Higginson has published a little book entitled Short Stories of American Authors which is a work heartily to be commended. He discusses the styles of Hawthorne, Poe, Thoreau, Howells, Helen Jackson and Henry James, and introduces also much personal matter in regard to them which will be interesting to the public. The sketches are admirably written Published by Lee & Shepard, Boston Received from Lippincott & Co. Price 75 cents.

The fourth volume of Oliver Optic's Illustrated Great Western Series of books is entitled, Going South, or Yachting on the Atlantic Coast; it is in its author's well-known manner, and contains, of course, plenty of incident and adventure of a character adapted to please every boy's fancy. The main idea of the story is in describing a voyage in a yacht from the northern lakes down the St Lawrence, and from there to the coast of Florida. This work shows that Oliver Optic still holds his own as among the most popular of writers for youth. From Lippincott & Co Published by Lee & Shepard. Price, $1 50

MAGAZINES.

The contents and illustrations of the January number of Scribner's Magazine combine the usual variety and excellence Among the most notable illustrated papers is the opening one on The United States Life-Saving Service by J H Merryman, with a variety of graphic illustrations by M. J Burns E. P Roe continues his discussion of Success with Small Fruits. Another notable paper is Young Artist's Life in New York descriptive of the Salmagundi Club, and illustrations by the members of the club, W. A Rogers, Walter Satrlaw, W. Saber, H P. Wolcott, F S Church, S G McCutcheon W. H. Low, H. P. Share, W H. Shelton, Walter Clark, J. E Kelley, Geo. Inness, Jr. J Lauber, J S Hartley and others The Acadians of Louisiana are described by R L Davids with illustrations by Allen Redwood. Richard Watson Gilder has a poem entitled A Madonna of Fra Lippo Lippi Thomas Wentworth Higginson has an interesting sketch of A Revolutionary Congressman on Horseback Henry W. Raymond contributes some extracts from the journal of his father, Henry J. Raymond. William C Church has an illustrated paper on American Arms and Ammunition. Richard Henry Stoddard contributes the poem Hymn to the Sea. Julia Ward Howe has a poem entitled The Spider's Lesson, and Henry Tirrell a poem Cor Cordium Thirza is a short story by Julia Schayer Barbour T Lathrop contributes the other story entitled A Personal and What came of it. Chapters XIV., XVII., are given of the serial Grandissimes and Henry James' story Confidence is concluded. The editorial departments are exceptionally varied and interesting.

The Tortures of Neuralgia.

These are being mitigated, and in a large number of cases wholly removed by the use of "Compound Oxygen," the new revitalizing agent which is now attracting such wide attention. Our "Treatise on Compound Oxygen" sent free. Drs. STARKEY & PALEN, 1112 Girard Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

News Notes.

General Hooker left a fortune of $900 000.

Pierre Lorillard's horses won over $26 000 in England.

Napa Valley, Cal., produced 1 700 000 gallons of wine this fall.

Meigs county, Tenn., will ship this year nearly 30 000 bushels of peas.

The cholera is playing havoc with fattening hogs in Roane county, Tenn.

Colored people in Georgia own property of an aggregate value of $5 182 308.

A $10 000 greenback was paid into the Alabama State Treasury last week.

New Orleans is to have a Municipal Gas Light Company run by New York capitalists.

A man has just died in the Maine State Prison who was sent there forty-five years ago.

Three hundred thousand Mohammedan pilgrims worship in the Kaaba of Mecca every year.

Of the 650 convicts in the Tennessee Penitentiary, there is not one sick in the hospital.

A fugitive murderer in Kentucky was pursued, captured, and taken to jail by his own father.

Three hundred and eighteen marriage licenses have been issued in Knoxville, Tenn., during 1879.

The deepest mine on the Pacific slope, or in America, is the Belcher, which has attained a vertical depth of 3 000 feet.

It is estimated that one hundred million feet of logs will be cut on the Penobscot waters during the coming winter.

Stealing a kiss costs £20 at Hanley, England. Stolen pleasures are generally sweet, and in this case they are certainly dear.

Emperor William, through 82 years of age, is still passionately fond of the chase, and is out hunting whenever he finds it possible.

At the place of the Prince of Wales at Sandringham the keepers always give a rabbit to whomsoever asks for it, but poaching is not permitted.

Baring Gould says that literary women in Germany have never been treated with fairness, and that by common consent they have been hunted down.

An English physician reports many instances within his experience where the boxing of children's ears by parents and teachers has resulted in deafness.

Olive Logan says the new Queen of Spain is a real bread and-butter Miss, as depicted by Byron, but her mother, the Empress of Austria is a woman of great beauty.

The Ameer of Afghanistan has a considerable foundation of education. He possesses a very fair acquaintance with European and Asiatic geography and makes shrewd remarks on Russian and Persian politics.

Ireland has a peer in the person of Viscount Taafe, who is an Austrian subject and count, and always resides in Austria; and Scotland has a peer in the person of Lord Fairfax, who is an American citizen and always resides in America.

The Empress of Russia who is spending the winter at Cannes, France, is not progressing favorably. She is suffering from anemia, a malady often engendered by the hot-house atmosphere of Russian dwellings between the months of October and April.

In the village of Piscinola, near Naples, a dispute between two peasants as to the ownership of a piece of land has led to a regular battle between their families. Both peasants were killed, the claimant's father and two women of his household being wounded.

Miss Kate Field brought from Stratford a slip of Shakspeare's mulberry tree, which she has presented to the New York Central Park Commissioners. It is to be kept in a greenhouse until April, and then planted with proper ceremony—probably upon the poet's birthday.

No matter what your feelings or ailment is, Hop Bitters will do you good. Prove it.

Colored diamonds are coming into vogue a good deal for fancy ornaments two or three hues being mounted together—a dark-brown diamond, for instance, being set in a ring with white diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and another ring showing two salmon-colored diamonds set in small white ones. Sleeve-buttons are being replaced by the old-fashioned sleeve links.

Five hundred dolls and a hundred thousand illustrated advertising cards are now on exhibition in one of the largest private residences in Buffalo for the benefit of the Charity Organization Society. It is a novel idea most effectively and artistically carried out. The dolls all have names A doll's party, a children's ball, and a subscription ball are among the features of a most unique fair, in which the leaders of Buffalo society have manifested great interest.

A Gentle Stimulus

Is imparted to the kidneys and bladder by Hostetter's Bitters which is most useful in overcoming torpidity of those organs. Besides infusing a new activity into them, this excellent tonic endows them with additional vigor and enables them better to undergo the wear and tear of the discharging function imposed upon them by nature. Moreover, as they are the channel for the escape of certain impurities from the blood, it increases their usefulness by strengthening and healthfully stimulating them. In certain morbid conditions of these important organs, they fall into a sluggish state, which is the usual precursor of disease. What then can be of greater service than a medicine which imparts them to greater activity when slothful? No maladies are more perilous than those which affect the kidneys; and a medicine which averts the peril should be highly esteemed.

What They Say.

Rev. J. E. Rankin, D D., of Washington, D C., certifies of Warner's Safe Kidney and Liver Cure: "I do not doubt that it has great virtue" Rev C. A. Harvey, D. D., Secretary of Howard University, certifies that for Bright's disease "no other remedy can be held for one moment in comparison with this." E. W. Neff, of Detroit, Mich., certifies that it completely cured him of a very serious chronic liver complaint J. B. Sherlock, of Rochester, N. Y., certifies that it cured him of Bright's disease of several years' standing, and that he believes it to be the most valuable remedy ever discovered. These are samples of hundreds of other testimonials.

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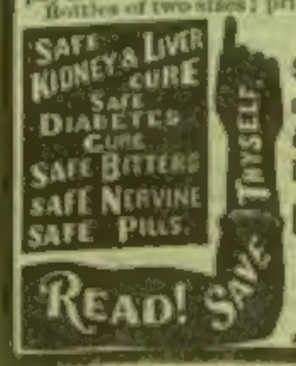

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Ladies' Department.

FASHION NOTES.

NOW that Winter has set in, and friendly gatherings of all kinds are taking place both in town and country, a few words on the subject of what to wear are certain to be acceptable. Never was there greater liberty in dress than at the present day. A lady may select any particular fashion that she thinks suits her, and adopt it as her particular style. Many go in for extreme simplicity, while others dazzle their friends by the costliness of their materials and the richness of the trimmings. Some wear soft shades of color dear to artists' eyes, while others appear in startling combinations and bright tints that a few years ago would have astonished, and been regarded as outre. Satin is still a very favorite material, and is mixed with plain and striped velvet, brocades of all kinds, and soft muslin or gauze. Black is always becoming, and now it is trimmed with a quantity of red. Pale colors are slowly giving way to deeper shades, but white and cream still maintain their popularity. For young ladies Indian muslin and a new sort of delicate silk muslin are worn, draped over batiste, silk, and satin, much trimmed with lace; the bodices of such skirts will be either a casaquin of striped silk or satin, or some other rich material; or a woven silk tight-fitting jersey. Some of the casaquins are worn high to the throat and long to the wrists, with ruches and ruffles of lace; but the corsage or cuirass veronese, which has been described in a former number, is cut square in front, and has sleeves of some thin material, or lace, matching the skirt. They lace up the back, and it fits closely to the figure. These in silk are to be seen in colors, as well as in cream and white, and have the effect of a perfectly fitting long basque bodice. A broad scarf passing round the hips and gracefully arranged at the back is generally worn; but sometimes a long tunic, finishing with fulness at the back, and long nouds of loops and ends, falling low on the train, are substituted. A black silk cuirass is worn with satin and gauze skirts; and, if the sleeves are not quite short on the shoulder, they are of gauze or satin. At a recent ball two costumes attracted a good deal of attention, and are worthy of note. One had a skirt of white tulle over satin, wimmed with clusters of gold wheat and thistles arranged in loops of satin; the bodice was of spun silk with gold threads introduced in the weaving; it was cut square, had very short sleeves, and an immense cluster of wheat and thistles on the left side; the guimpe was of tulle, edged with gold thread; a wide scarf of gold-threaded tulle was arranged across the front of the skirt where the bodice ended, and was looped at the back with a cluster of wheat and thistles falling low on the train. The other toilette was somewhat similar, with the exception of the threads being silver; the tunic was embroidered in silver, draped with large single roses of deep red tied with silver cord and tassels; the sleeves reached the elbow, and were made of embroidered net. A costume in black, profusely trimmed with jet, with clusters of sunflowers, was arranged in the same style. When the brocaded and fancy casaquins are worn, some of the material is introduced on the skirt, and sleeves usually match the skirt. These jackets take various forms. Some are tight-fitting basques, others are coats with long, slender lappets extending down the sides of the train, and holding the drapery at the back in position; others are cut away from the front, and terminate at the back in narrow coat-tails. Whatever shape these jackets are, and whether made of velvet or satin, they may be turned to account in a multitude of ways by those who go much into society, for they can be worn over both white and colored skirts. Bodices of Eastern-looking materials, with gold intermixed, are much worn just now, with skirts of satin, silk, or gauze. The trimming is sometimes of gold and colored beads, and occasionally the tunic has loops of small threaded beads fastened all over it, while the bodice is trimmed to match. Some of the bodices are pointed back and front, others have long coat tails, which are turned over, lined with a color, and lost in the folds of the skirt at the back. A few that are square in front are cut low, almost to the waist, to show the lace chemisette, and are attached by small strings, placed at distances, and these strings are tied in bows in the centre of the chemisette. This is a pretty fashion for the pale flowered foulard dresses that are worn over flounced skirts of muslin; the bows connecting the low square-cut bodices are of the color of the flower on the foulard. Some of these dresses are arranged in double panniers, the under ones being of plain colored foulard, and the bodice, train and upper ones of flowered. The underskirt is composed of alternate flounces of lace and plain foulard; the panniers are edged with lace, and caught back with large rosettes of color. Mittens are generally worn with this style of dress, and the lace ruffles are turned up away from the arm. A flounced muslin skirt, made on a silk or batiste foundation, has frequently a long draped tunic, composed of alternate rows of satin and lace insertion, and is looped up high on the hips with large bows and loops of satin. The basque bodice, cut with a long point in front, short on the hips, and square at the back, has sleeves of the lace insertion and satin just below the elbows; and for trimming has one very large cluster of artificial flowers on the left side. These large clusters are very much worn now, and give a touch of color and brilliancy to the toilette. Gauze with a black ground and red and gold lines is used for draping over black satin skirts, with bodices of fancy material to match, or black satin. The skirt is edged with plaitings of satin alternating with fancy material, and the tunic in front is arranged to form three deep points, edged with either fringe or lace. If flowers are added, they have metallic-tinted leaves. Flowers are used in profusion for ball dresses, and some are very large. Ruby color of a rich tint is popular just now in various materials. It is much trimmed with lace, dyed to the color of cafe au lait, and sometimes with bead embroidery of its own color. India muslin dresses are also trimmed with this lace. Two broad scarves are now often arranged to form the tunic, and are crossed in front, looped at the back, and allowed to fall very long. Sometimes they are lined with a pale, delicate color, and are dexterously turned over at the back of the skirt, to show the contrasting colors. Lace flounces, lined with a color, can be arranged thus; and at the back, in among the folds, loops of colored ribbons (especially those mixed with gold) or flowers, can be added, according to taste. Soft French cashmere is a favorite material for young ladies, and, trimmed with satin, is very dressy-looking. Occasionally a striped plush casaquin of delicate hues is worn with it, and if well-fitting, looks nicely. Long gloves have gold or silver braid let into them sometimes, which has the effect of bracelets. The hair is dressed so much now, and so much curled, that but little in the way of ornament is needed. For evening wraps, mantles with large sleeves are made in various colors, with lining and small hood of colored silk. White and black mantles, lined with red, seem most popular. The lining is quilted, and many have fur round the throat, if not all round the mantle. Brown fur on pale blue and rich red is fashionable, with gilt clasps at the throat.

Fireside Chat.

"HOLIDAY CHEER."

AT Christmas time, every housewife, be she foolish or wise, rich or poor, gives some sort of party after its kind. In some cases it is thought desirable to have the whole feast prepared at home, and in others it is a matter of necessity, for various reasons, to do so. Christmas parties are not like other parties, and the modifications of which the bill of fare and the general style of such entertainments are susceptible, are too many to be enumerated in sufficient detail to be of practical utility to our readers. I propose, therefore, in the following collection of carefully selected recipes, to lay before my readers some materials from which each housewife shall be able to pick out for herself as many dishes as may be necessary to make up the bill of fare for her Christmas party according to her own individual taste and ideas of economy or hospitality:

Boiled Turkey.—Prepare the turkey as for roasting, make a filling of bread crumbs seasoned with pepper and salt, a teaspoonful of sweet marjoram, half an one of sweet basil, three ounces of melted butter, and twenty-five raw oysters chopped and poured in with a few spoonsful of their juice, mix thoroughly and fill the turkey but do not pack it, sew up the place you fill it through, truss the legs and wings as for roasting, and put it in a large meat boiler, with a tablespoonful of salt, and cover with *boiling* water; keep a kettle of boiling water to replenish with, and allow fifteen minutes to every pound of turkey. If you put oysters in the filling serve with egg sauce, as oyster-sauce destroys the taste of the seasoning, if you omit the oysters in the filling put a small chopped onion in the place of them, and serve with oyster sauce.

Boned Turkey.—Singe the turkey, draw it, wash it clean, wipe dry, and lay it on a clean cloth; then with a sharp knife and your fingers take the bones from the legs and thighs, twisting and breaking the joints, the same with the wings, then slit the bird up the back from the neck to the rump, and with the knife and your fingers detach the meat from the bones, slowly and gradually, until you can draw out the whole carcase; chop very fine two pounds of lean ham, grate two quarts of stale bread crumbs, mix the ham well through them, and add an onion chopped very fine, a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, two teaspoonsful of sweet marjoram, one of sweet basil, half a saltspoonful of grated lemon-peel, the same of nutmeg, four hard boiled eggs chopped fine, a small teaspoonful of black pepper, and six ounces of melted butter, mix all well together, fill the body of the bird, and sew it up the back, make it as nearly as possible the shape it was before you boned it, the body must be stuffed very tightly to do this, then put some of the dressing in the legs and wings where you removed the bones, truss it and secure it with the skewers so that the filling will not fall out, season the outside of the bird, and roast it slowly a quarter of an hour for every pound, basting it frequently and covering it with buttered paper if getting too brown. Prepare a jelly as follows: have ready three or four quarts of stock, that taken from boiled chicken is the best, from which you have taken all the fat, bring it to a boil; whisk the whites and shells of two eggs in a basin with half a pint of cold water, stir this in the stock, bring it to a boil again, strain through a clean cloth and add two boxes of gelatine that has been soaked in cold water to cover, for an hour, stir this in until thoroughly dissolved, then lay the turkey breast down in a deep pan or mould, pour the jelly around and over it and set in a cool place for twenty-four hours, turn it out on a large dish, breast upwards, and garnish and serve.

Cake (Savarin).—Take 1lb. of fine sifted flour, 4oz. of pounded loaf sugar, ¼lb of fresh butter, eight eggs, and 1oz. of German yeast. Dissolve the yeast in rather less than half a pint of tepid milk, strain it, and work into it so much of the flour as will produce a soft dough; roll this into a ball, place the remainder of the flour into a deep basin, lay the ball of dough on it, cover up the basin, and leave it in a warm place until the ball of dough (the sponge) has risen. Now add the sugar, the butter (just liquified), the eggs, and a pinch of salt, and work the mixture lightly with the fingers until a smooth paste is obtained. Butter plentifully a large plain border mould (Savarin mould), mince some blanched almonds, not too fine, and strew the mould with as many of these as will stick to the butter, then pour in the cake mixture, which should not fill the mould more than three parts full. Place the mould, covered up, in a warm place, and when the cake has well risen, bake it in a moderate oven for about one hour and a half. Before turning the cake out of the mould, stab the top of it (which will be the bottom when the cake is turned out) with a knife in several places, and pour all over it a mixture of two parts of old rum and one of very sweet syrup, so as to soak it well, but not too much, to the depth of an inch; then turn it out on a dish and serve. It may be eaten either hot or cold. If hot jam sauce should be served with it.

Chicken and Oysters.—Prepare and divide a chicken as for a pie, stew it in enough water to cover it until tender, which, if a young chicken, will be in an hour; if old, much longer. Take out the chicken and drain it, keeping it hot; put in the liquor a quarter of a pound of butter, rubbed to a paste with a heaping tablespoonful of flour; season with salt and pepper; add two hard-boiled eggs chopped and a tablespoonful of chopped parsley; drain one hundred oysters, add them to the gravy; stew until the oysters are cooked, which will be in five minutes, and pour over the chicken and serve. If the oysters are large, fifty are sufficient.

Beef Braised.—Take a piece of rump or round of beef, about 8lb. or 10 lb., tie it up with string, and put it into a stewpan just large enough to hold it, with the following ingredients: ¼lb. of ham or bacon sliced, a calf's foot cut up into small pieces, an onion and two carrots sliced, a clove of garlic, a bundle of sweet herbs, half a head of celery, a few cloves, whole pepper, and salt to taste. Add half a tumbler of white wine or a small glass of brandy, and about a pint of cold stock or water. Place a piece of buttered paper over all, put on the lid close, and simmer gently for four or five hours. If practicable, a few hot cinders should be kept on the lid. When done take out the piece of beef, remove the string, and serve with its own gravy, freed from fat and strained. Put the beef when done under a weight till quite cold, then trim the joint neatly, and glaze it with some of the gravy (which will be a stiff jelly), chopped up.

Economical Christmas Pudding.—½lb. of currants and raisins, of suet chopped fine, and of carrots and potatoes grated raw and fine, 6oz. breadcrumbs, 5oz. flour, half a nutmeg, a pinch of mixed spice, and 3oz. mixed peel. Mix well, and boil slowly for four or five hours. This pudding will eat as good as many that cost more, provided only that it is properly boiled.

Rich Plum Pudding.—From an old family recipe: 1lb. of bread crumbled small, ½lb. of suet chopped fine, ½lb. of raisins stoned and chopped small, ½lb. of currants, about 6oz. powdered sugar, ½oz. candied lemon peel cut small, a little nutmeg, four eggs. Moisten with raisin wine, about two glasses. Make it as moist as stuffing for mince pies. Boil five or six hours. Sauce, melted butter with mountain wine. Or, 1lb. of the crumb of a household loaf grated fine, 1lb. of beef suet chopped fine, 1¼lb. currants washed, rubbed and dried; 1lb. raisins stoned, ½lb. moist sugar, ½lb. citron and orange peel chopped fine, ½oz mixed spice, one tablespoonful of flour. These ingredients must be well mixed before adding the following: Seven eggs well beaten, one wineglassful brandy, two wineglassfuls sherry. Boil for nine hours. Before removing the cloth the pudding must be plunged into cold water for a few seconds, and then left to stand for two or three minutes.

Salad of Oranges.—Peel eight oranges with a sharp knife, so as to remove every vestige of skin from them, core them as you would core apples, and lay them, either whole or cut in slices, in a deep dish; strew them over with plenty of powdered loaf sugar, and then add a large wineglassful of pale brandy. Keep the dish covered close till the time of serving.

Tartlets, Apple.—Peel, core, and halve some large apples, trimming them so as to get them all the one size; drop them as they are done into cold water with the juice of a lemon squeezed into it, to prevent their turning brown. Have ready a syrup (made with one pound of sugar and one quart of water) boiling hot, put the apples into this with the thin rind of a lemon and two or three cloves. As soon as cooked (great care must be taken that they do not break), take them out and leave them to get cold, then set the syrup on the fire to reduce. Make some short paste with two ounces of sugar, two ounces of butter, the yolks of four eggs, a little water, a pinch of salt, and flour of sufficient quantity; work it lightly and roll it out to the thickness of one-eighth of an inch. Line some patty-pans with it, fill them with uncooked rice, and place on each tartlet half an apple, the concave side uppermost; pour a little of the reduced syrup on each tartlet, and lastly, put a piece of guava or currant jelly in the cavity of each apple.

Tartlets, Cream.—Line some patty-pans with short paste as in the preceding recipe, and bake them; when cold put a layer of jam on each and fill them with whipped cream well heaped up, made as follows: Sweeten half a pint of cream with some loaf sugar which has been well rubbed on the outside of a lemon, and then pounded. Put it into a perfectly clean cold bowl, and add to it the beaten-up white of an egg. Take a perfectly clean cold whisk, and whip the cream to a stiff froth in a very cold place, or over ice. As the froth rises, lay it on a hair sieve in a cool place to drain.

Dolls made of dried fruit are a very good present for the little ones round the holidays. They can quite appreciate a gift that can be eaten, and has other attractions besides. The little foundations once made will serve over and over again, and are simple and inexpensive to start with, as they only consist of a two-inch square of wood, with two wire pins inserted upright, side by side, in the stand. Two almonds threaded lengthwise, one on each wire, will do for the feet. Large raisins are used for the legs, prunes for the knickerbockers, and the body is of figs, placed on both wires. A little piece of wire is run through the top fig to make the arms, for which small raisins are put on, and two larger ones for the neck. The head is of one large prune, with bits of almonds for the eyes, nose and mouth; and the hat is made of half a small red apple. So much for the fruit gentlemen; now for the lady. Her dress skirt is composed of three graduated red apples passed over both pins, and, instead of three, one raisin and the almond answer respectively for each leg and foot.

Meringues.—Whisk some whites of eggs to a stiff froth, mix with them, with a spoon, quickly and thoroughly, some loaf sugar finely powdered, in the proportion of one tablespoonful for each white of egg used; then place a sheet of white paper on a meringue board, and, with a tablespoon, lay out the mixture on it in heaps about the size of an egg, and about two inches apart, taking care to make them all as nearly as possible of the same size, and evenly shaped. Strew a little powdered sugar over them, shake off what does not stick to the meringues, and at once place the board in a moderate oven. When the meringues have assumed a straw color, and are hard to the touch, take them out, detach them from the paper carefully, and either scoop out the inside or press it in with a teaspoon; then replace them in the oven on a baking sheet to dry for half an hour or so. The oven must be very "slack," and it is best to leave the door of it open during this part of the operation. When the meringues are cold have ready some whipped cream, flavored as may be fancied, fill the hollow of each meringue with it, and join them in pairs by sticking together the under-side of each, and serve.

Answers to Inquirers.

L. G. (Darlington, S. C.)—The gentleman ought to declare his intentions and you would then know what to rely upon.

E. M. B. (Philadelphia, Pa.)—A gentleman should introduce the lady to another gentleman, and not the lady to the stranger.

FURNAS, (Sullivan, Ind.)—At the wedding-breakfast the bride cuts the wedding cake, and the bridesmaids distribute it to the guests

BELLA (Riverton, N. J.)—A gentleman on visiting at the house of a stranger, or where he is only a little known, should carry his hat with him in his hand into the room into which he is ushered.

NELLIE, (Bridgton, Pa.)—The conduct of the gentleman you refer to in reference to the terms of his acceptance of your carte-de-visite is not appropriate to the name of the title you lavish upon him.

W. P. L. (Philadelphia, Pa.)—The word opera is Italian, and means a tale represented by vocal and instrumental music, scenery, and dancing. Mozart died of fever in the year 1792, aged thirty-six.

NELLY WHITE, (Gadsen, S. C.)—Having exchanged cards with a stranger does not entitle him to come without an introduction, especially as he knows your friend. Let that friend bring him to your house.

PERPLEXED HELEN, (Jefferson, S. C.)—If a married woman has acquired any money or property by her own earnings and savings, she can make a will bequeathing the same to any one whom she likes to make her heir.

CONSTANT, (Morrow, Ohio.)—Her talk about beaus is of no account. She is only trying to worry you a little. We don't believe there is any other fellow who has possession of her affections, for, if there was, she wouldn't be so tantalizing.

F. E. MAC, (Lewis, Mo.)—There were two Pretenders. The first, who is the hero of the rebellion of 1715, was James the son of James the Second; and the other who headed the rebellion of 1745, was Charles Edward, the grandson of the exiled King.

M. J. (Newport, R. I.)—In assisting a lady into a carriage or any other vehicle, you should of course remain by its side until she becomes safely seated. To get into the vehicle first, and then drag her in, would be a most awkward and unbecoming proceeding.

IGNORAMUS, (Pottsville, Pa.)—Orange blossoms, in the language of flowers, signify chastity. They have the same signification when worn by a bride, but we cannot say from what nation the custom is derived—most likely it was introduced into Europe by the polished Saracens.

WARDEN, (Olympus, Tenn.)—Consult your friends and follow the advice most consonant with your inclinations and means. As we know nothing of your habits, age, or capabilities, we could not counsel you respecting the best step for you to take, and as a rule we do not furnish such advice

F. L. M. (Atlantic, N. J.)—The occasion on which Grace Darling signalized herself was the wreck of the Forfarshire steamer on one of the Faroe Islands, on her voyage from Hull to Dundee, Scotland, on the 5th of September, 1838. By her splendid courage Grace saved the lives of nine persons.

FANNIE, (Monroe, Mich.)—The following are the chief signs in "an Flirtation: Fan fast, I am independent; fan slow, I am engaged; fan with right hand in front of face, Leave me; open and shut, Kiss me; open wide, Love; one-half, Friendship; shut, hate; swinging the fan, Can I see you home?

STAGE, (Philadelphia, Pa.)—The first theatrical troupe ever on this continent came over from London in the ship Charming Polly. Arriving at Yorktown, the company held several rehearsals on the ship, after which they went to Williamsburg, N. Y., and raised the curtain in the play of "The Merchant of Venice," in May, 1752.

J. S. P. (Swift, Minn.)—Your friend who says that "a pair of scissors" means more than one pair is mistaken. The word scissors is a plural noun, which has no singular form. A scissor, if there were such a word, would be one cutting blade or shear. A pair of scissors is two cutting blades, joined together with a pin or pivot.

LANCE, (Carter, Tenn.)—If you cannot get the young gentleman to consent to the cancelling of your engagement, you should refrain from taking any positive steps until he shall have had a fair opportunity for reflection. If he is as proud as you represent him to be, he will probably give up his claim to your hand with scornful emphasis the moment he knows you prefer another to him.

A. F. (Tompkins, N. Y.)—A youth who has not yet completed his education, and who has no occupation or profession, has no business to think of marriage; nor has he any right to attempt to bind a young lady to him by promise of marriage to be filled in the distant and uncertain future. Leave the young lady free to love you or not, as she may choose, when you shall have acquired your profession.

I. N. (Philadelphia, Pa.)—Swearing on the Bible was first introduced into judicial proceedings by the Saxons, about A. D. 600. It was called a corporal oath, because the witness touches with his hand some part of the Holy Scriptures. There is reason to believe that the oath was originally taken by merely laying the hand on the top of the book, and kissing it according to the present mode was not deemed essential, and was not practiced. The kissing the book has probably been introduced as a greater mark of reverence, and a firmer pledge of truth.

T. E. (Wayne, Mich.)—Joan of Arc was born about the year 1410 or 1411, in the little hamlet of Domremy, near the Meuse, and about three leagues south of Vaucouleurs, on the borders of Champagne, France. She was burnt at the stake, May 31 1431, in the marketplace of Rouen; but whether her death is to be attributed to the Burgundians, who sold the Maid of Orleans; the English, who permitted her execution; the French, of that party who brought it about and perpetrated it; or the French of the opposite side, who made so few efforts to save her to whom they owed liberation and their national existence, is a matter about which historians disagree.

JOHN, (Salem, N. J.)—When you asked her if your company would be agreeable to her in the future, why didn't you leave it to her to make the next engagement? But neither did she have reason for offence, for she let you go home with her and invited you in. But, then, when you asked her to name another evening when you might call, why didn't you let well enough alone and wait for the reply without going into a stiff and stupid explanation? If she seems disposed to take you, escort her home again, if you wish, but don't try to force a girl into logical explanations of her conduct. If she seems to like to have you about, be satisfied with that great gain.

THOMAS B. (Cumberland, Ky.)—You should think over carefully your entire conduct since you have been visiting the lady to whom you are very much attached, and see if you can remember ever having given any cause for her stepmother's dislike for you, which you say she takes no pains to hide. Also ask the young lady if she can give you a clue to the secret; and failing there in the discovery, go yourself and ask the stepmother if you have in any way offended her. If she is the right kind of a woman; she will tell you her reasons for her treatment of you, and then you can settle the matter in one way or another.

MECHANIC, (Sussex, N. J.)—You are mistaken. The clock at the Parliament Houses, London, Eng., is the largest one in the world. The four dials of this clock are each twenty-two feet in diameter. Every half minute the point of the minute hand moves nearly seven inches. The clock will go eight and a half days, but it only strikes seven and a half, thus indicating any neglect in winding up. The mere winding of the striking mechanism takes two hours. The pendulum is fifteen feet long; the wheels are of cast iron; the hour bell is eight feet high and nine feet in diameter, weighing near fifteen tons, and the hammer alone weighs more than four hundred pounds.

NEWS, (Cayuga, N. Y.)—For an account of the purchase of the first potter's field see New Testament, St. Matthew, xxvii., 3-8. This field, purchased by the priests with the thirty pieces of silver as a burial place for strangers, is near Jerusalem and was well-known at the time as "the field of the potter." Potter's field therefore became the name which ever after has marked a spot used for a similar purposes—the burial of the pilgrim and the stranger, the poor and friendless. There is no touch of reproach or contempt in the name. On the contrary, it was believed in the Middle Ages that the soil of this field near Jerusalem had the power of rapidly decomposing bodies interred in it, and in consequence of this or on account of its sacred character, quantities of earth were taken away among others by the Pisan crusaders in 1218 for their campo santa—or holy field—at Pisa, and by the Empress Helena for that at Rome. The formation of the field is cretaceous, and it is well-known that chalk promotes decay.